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Thesis

NATURALISM IN THE WRITINGS
OF
STEPHEN CRANE

by

Virginia Cook
(B.S.Sc., Boston University, 1940)

submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

1942

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INTRODUCTION

In 1925-26, exactly one quarter century after the premature death of an outstanding young American author, Alfred A. Knopf of New York accorded him recognition with the publication of *The Work of Stephen Crane*, a twelve volume limited edition of seven hundred and fifty copies. The issue was well publicized and received with wide acclaim. Each volume[1] is introduced by a noted man or woman of letters, namely: Joseph Hergesheimer, Robert H. Davis, Carl Van Doren, William Lyon Phelps, Amy Lowell, Thomas Beer, Willa Cather, H. L. Mencken, Sherwood Anderson, Charles Michelson, and Wilson Follett, editor for the entire *Work*.

The year 1926 marks the high point of revived interest in Stephen Crane as a literary figure. The peak of fame achieved during his own lifetime was reached by Crane in 1896 with the publication of his best-known work, usually considered his masterpiece: *The Red Badge of Courage*.[2] *Maggie* was republished in the same year, to find acceptance within the jackets of the respected firms of Appleton in New York[3] and Heineman in London.[4] A cheap paper edition of

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[1] Vol. VIII, excepted. The latter contains Part II of *The O'Ruddy*; it is a continuation of Vol. VII, therefore requires no introduction.

[2] Stephen Crane, *The Red Badge of Courage. An Episode of the American Civil War*., (New York: Appleton, 1896).

[3] Stephen Crane, *Maggie, A Girl of the Streets*., (New York: Appleton, 1896)...There was also a second cheaper edition of the above published at the same time.

[4] Stephen Crane, *Maggie, Child of the Street*, (London: Heineman, 1896).

Maggie, Crane's first literary effort, put forth under the pseudonym of Johnston Smith, had been privately printed in 1893 and placed for sale on news stands with no success whatsoever. Later efforts of William Dean Howells to sell the story to several magazines were of no avail because Victorian editor considered the writing coarse and shocking. It took Crane's personal fame, brought to him by *The Red Badge of Courage*, to win a place for *Maggie*.

The entire balance of Crane's literary accomplishment was crowded into the four ensuing years, in which his failing vitality was taxed to the utmost with the work of writing and the burdens of fame. The hectic, semi-public life he led during these days, together with the years of privation he had suffered before, combined their tolls to bring the end of life held within his frail body sooner than it might otherwise have come to him. A sense of the little remaining time together with the physical weakness of the man tended to lower the quality of Crane's work during the waning years of his short career. The brilliance of his style was maintained to the end, but was then captured briefly in fine short sketches, or sometimes hopelessly enmeshed in the flimsy gauze of a longer romance such as he should never have attempted. The power and magnitude of *The Red Badge of Courage* he was not able to recapture. It seemed as if the light of genius had burned too hot within him and seared his body's strength away to a wispy still-glowing ember. There was such a short time for the world to view the flame that was there once, flashing light.

It is not to be surmised that Stephen Crane was a great literary figure. His place had already faded into duskiness at his passing, where the red and gold of a great man's memory might long have lingered.

Yet in the twenties, and unto today the contribution of Stephen Crane to American literature has seemed to grow anew in importance and significance. The hot coal of his genius imposed upon the stark bareness of naturalism is striking and refreshing, completely out of the Victorian scene or any setting bound by the narrow mores of an age or a people. It was his bold naturalism depicting a world cruel and crude and unrelenting as found in _Maggie_ that made people of his own day wary of accepting him. It was the refreshing and invigorating simplicity, and vivid color, within his naturalism that made the "literary clan" of the twenties welcome him as their own.

It is felt that the naturalism of Stephen Crane is worthy of study in this thesis, in small part because of the vivid splash he created against the grey-lavender pattern of a Victorian background, but, principally because, it is believed by the author of this thesis, that his contribution to American literature becomes increasingly significant in the light of our present years.

In dealing with the subject it has been necessary to define first the meaning of naturalism. The term until recent years has had a different meaning, confined to the field of philosophy. Many authors are exceedingly vague or make little

attempt at all to differentiate between naturalism and its related, but unlike, perspective: realism.

With the implications of the term, naturalism, as defined, well in mind the author has attempted to present a comparative and critical exposition of the naturalism of Stephen Crane with consideration of the influences at work in its evolution, the environment that produced it, the choice, treatment, and purpose of the literary forms that contained it, and an evaluation of the man's philosophical perspective in terms of it.

It is not within the purpose nor the intentions of this thesis to supply biographical and narrative material in regard to the authors and literary selections discussed. However, when such information has been considered vital to the proper understanding of the subject it has been supplied in the Appendix. Where samples from an author's writings were considered necessary to support views held as to his style, or for comparative purposes, they have been included, usually at ample length, within the body of the thesis.

The principal difficulty encountered in research has been the scarcity of related references by competent authorities. It was, unfortunately, necessary to lean more than heavily upon the opinions expressed from a few reliable sources for support and justification of the author's own critical judgments. The contributions of Vernon L. Parrington and Thomas Beer have been invaluable. It is exceedingly difficult

to find writings of any kind worthy of acceptance, either critical or biographical, concerning Stephen Crane that are not obvious restatements of the findings of Thomas Beer. Other sources, quite often questionable, are slight in quantity, and practically unusable for support in a critical essay, such as this thesis would attempt to be.

Parrington possessed less original source material than Beer concerning Crane. However his mere notes have been of great value for substantiating the author's own critical conclusions. It is to be regretted that Parrington's life was not spared long enough for him to complete fully his interrupted work upon American naturalism.

It would be difficult yet to predict fully the influence of Crane's work upon American literature because his is a force still actively at work in the persons of living authors, in a naturalistic movement not entirely complete in crystallization for adequate perspective. Therefore it has seemed wise and necessary to omit this phase of study which should logically find a place in the full consideration of the subject: "Naturalism in the Writings of Stephen Crane."

CHAPTER I

NATURALISM: HISTORY AND DEFINITION

In order to deal properly with the subject of this thesis, "Naturalism in the Writings of Stephen Crane," it is first necessary to establish a definition for naturalism when it is used in reference to literature. The term is of ancient origins within the field of philosophy. However its meaning is one that has evolved and changed throughout the years since ancient Greece, and it has assumed varied and diverse proportions in the contributions of several scholars with the passing of the years. The word as applied to literature has grown out of these philosophical backgrounds which should be known and understood, yet Emile Zola made new use of it when he first applied it to his writings.

MATERIALISTIC MECHANISM[1]

Naturalism began very early under Democritus (about 460-360 B.C.) and the Greek atomists as a materialistic explanation of the mechanism of the universe. This school maintained that all existence including the four elements--earth, water, air and fire--and also the less tangible form of matter--mind or soul--were merely various forms of atomic matter, made up of minute atomic particles in motion. Such particles were endowed with

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[1] Paragraph headings are suggested by the definitions of Irwin Edman as presented in an article on "Naturalism," Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences, Vol. II, p. 302-305.

sensation when they came together in certain quantities and formations, as in the human body; with death disintegration of the atomic structure was effected.

PHILOSOPHIC NATURALISM

The philosophic naturalism of Spinoza (1634-1677) was of a diametrically different brand. He attempted to apply scientific method to the explanation of the universe, but in establishing the reality of God, the infinite, found it necessary to declare all finite material quantities ultimate unreality. All that truly existed, then, had its being in God. Yet he was of too scientific a mind to deny outright the existence of the physical world, he merely directed man the way to escape its finiteness. In spite of his incongruities Spinoza truly attempted to recognize fact and accept it wherever he found it. His was a cosmology of a regular order which was more dependent upon mechanism than materialism, yet which was definitely identified with nature. He sought the natural way of the universe.

Spinoza's naturalism may seem remote from the generally conceived definition, yet while it is true that "all materialistic systems of philosophy have naturalism as their matrix, ... not all naturalisms are materialistic."[2] For instance, behaviorism is a form of naturalism because by its method explanations of phenomena are ultimately brought down to the fundamental materials of nature. In certain other varieties of naturalism there are to be found idealistic elements.

DYNAMIC NATURALISM

The philosophies of the Greek, Aristotle

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2. *Loc. cit.*

(384 B.C.-322), and a living twentieth-century scholar, George Santayana, both embody a dynamic naturalism.

Aristotle had an scientific type of mind. To him the life process was in itself the end of existence. Ordinarily concepts could not exist separate from the material world, nor was matter without form possible. The two were interdependent. Matter was made dynamic in Aristotle's definition of it as an organic process. True existence (quite contrary to the belief of Spinoza) was to be realized not apart from the phenomenal world, but in it.

God was, in such a cosmology, the only immaterial substance: "spirit without body, mind without sense, pure activity without action or desire."[3] Toward Him all creation moved as by inner necessity, and as a life process itself was naturally motivated toward Him, He became the ultimate end of His creation. Aristotle's naturalism brought into happy unity the material and the spiritual (or idealistic) components of the universe which have been so drastically separated by many other philosophers and theologians.

George Santayana (1863--) recognizes a "realm of pure essences--the infinite array of all possible intelligible 'characters'."[4] This plane is removed from the more limited field of man's existence, but it occasionally is possible for him to sense it through "spirit." Man's ordinary life is in the

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[3] Arthur Kenyon Rogers, A Student's History of Philosophy, third edition, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1937), p. 109.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 483.

naturalistic realm of substance: the natural world. Yet the two are closely interrelated. The animal organism responds correctly to its environment through spontaneous "animal faith," and through this faith is led into involuntary conformity with the laws which transcend its limited world into the infinite unknown. Thus the life of the organism is in fulfillment of natural laws.

NATURAL MAN

In Jean Jacques Rosseau's (1712-1778) naturalism the problem was not one of matter vs. spirit, but of natural man vs. civilized man. Rousseau saw man as enslaved by artificialities. The quest among the arts and sciences was accompanied by bondage because a few men freed themselves for leisure at the expense of hundreds of their toiling fellows. He recommended a return to the freedom of the primitive. The ideal approach to natural living for modern man was to be had in a state where individual freedom was enforced and none were permitted to earn more than their share of the goods, nor submit themselves to servitude, except for the benefit of all the state.

PSYCHO-NATURALISM

The political philosophy of Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882) was much akin to that of Rosseau. Yet the transcendental influence upon his thinking placed heaviest emphasis upon the conscious experience of man, apart from the physical, material world. "The universe he conceived of as a divine whole, whereof each man is his own center from whom flows life that has flown in upon him,

perenially fresh, perennially a new creation. The law for things is not the law for mind; man is unkinged in acknowledging any lesser sovereignty than the sovereignty of self."5

Reality of experience for Emerson was in the mind. As Rousseau had urged the return to natural man, so Emerson urged that clinging to old, out-worn, artificial ideas be done away with and a return made to fundamental sincerities. He wrote in his journal:

> What shall be the substance of my shrift? Adam in the garden, I am to new-name all the beasts of the field and all the gods in the sky. I am to invite men drenched in Time to recover themselves and come out of time and taste their native immortal air ... I am to try the magic of sincerity, that luxury permitted only to kings and poets. I am to celebrate the spiritual powers in their infinite contrast to the mechanical philosophy of this time.6

Emerson's ideal was ever in condemnation of the material. Yet he did not shut his eyes to ugly reality. In seeking to explain the great gap between his ideal and the world that existed he placed the blame upon faulty social institutions which had bound men against their natural way of life.

MODERN SCIENTIFIC REALISM

The theories of Charles Darwin (1809-1882) were the first to have definite traceable effect upon the naturalism of literature in the biological determinism of Emile Zola. Darwin in his two books, The Origin of Species (1859) and The Descent of Man (1861) worked out two hypotheses. I. Species

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5. Vernon Louis Parrington, Main Currents of American Thought, (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1927), Vol. II. The Romantic Revolution in America, p. 390.
6. Ralph Waldo Emerson, Journals, Vol. v, p. 288, (as quoted by Parrington.)

(distinct forms of animal life) are mutable, and many which today are widely dissimilar may be descended from common ancestors. II. Mutations come about in four ways: (1) variation among individuals of a species, (2) struggle for existence, (3) survival of the fittest, (4) heredity.

Herbert Spencer (1820-1903) carried the idea of biological determinism into the field of ethics. He concluded that there must be a direct association between pleasure and what is good for the organism, and between pain and what is harmful to the organism in order that it may survive at all. Therefore in living species a certain rudimentary natural ethics has been established.

The economic determinism of Karl Marx (1818-1883) became a basis for the naturalistic writings of the later nineteenth century novelist Flaubert. Marx preached the doctrine of class struggle. He interpreted history in the light of economic theory. He observed that the equality of man everywhere tends to become disrupted when a few capitalists begin to exploit the labor of the masses. Ultimately society degenerates into two classes at war against each other; the slaves or workers, and the masters or employers. He demonstrated from history that a series of gradually descending cycles in the class struggle, tending toward greater masses and more concentrated capitalistic power, was to be expected. The feudal system of lord and serf was overcome by the bourgeois class which, when it was supreme, degenerated again into the present society of capitalist and the proletariat. Marx maintained that a

continued downward progression was to be expected until such a time as the oppressed workers comprised nearly the entire population and capital was concentrated in the hands of an enfeebled few. At such a time the working people would rise up and seize what was rightfully theirs. Marx urged the proletariat to hasten the natural arrival of such a day by means of agitation and revolution, which were to be made possible through organization of the workers nationally and internationally.

In general, all naturalistic philosophies are based upon the assumption that there is an order within nature (reality) that is sufficient unto itself. There is no need for further probing beyond this order because its elements themselves constitute all explanation that may be given of any object or event. The order is the explanation.

Such a theory presents cosmos, not chaos, unity amid variety, permanence amid change, and enduring intelligible reality amid diverse and bewildering appearances. The universe, one of order and laws, becomes intelligible, not puzzling.[7]

Naturalism in literature is partly to be distinguished from realism in that it is, of the two, the more closely bound to philosophy. Indeed, realism has been defined as a method, naturalism as a philosophy:

> Realism is a method: accuracy in depicting the surface of actual life and its setting. Naturalism, is a philosophy: the interpretation of life in terms of natural, or rather mechanistic,

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[7] Last two paragraphs written from the summary of "naturalism" given in the following essay: Irwin Edman, "Naturalism," Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences, Vol. XI, p. 302-305.

> forces of heredity, impulse, and environment, and the repudiation of specifically human or spiritual values.[8]

Naturalism, having the depth of insight that is due in a philosophy, should not be confused with pure objectivism, a surface point of view, by which it is attempted to maintain a scientific objectivity in regards to the limited field of the material aspects of life wholly outside and away from the inner mechanisms of the more subjective mental functions of man.

Nor is naturalism mere amoralism which infers a refusal to assume an attitude of any sort. Identification with a philosophy presupposes an attitude. There is a system of ethics within naturalism; Spencer extended the theory of biological determinism to include just that.

Naturalism should not be judged alone from the surface attributes which frequently may accompany it. Such use of material as in the "ruthless treatment of fact" and the "shocking exposé" are characteristic of naturalism, but are not prerequisites of it.

"Naturalism was the term which Emile Zola seized upon and, transforming it from its traditional scientific sense, made it into a war-cry for the new literature and drama."[9] Ament's definition of naturalism (quoted several paragraphs

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[8] William S. Ament, Fiction and Naturalism, "Scripps College Papers, "Number 2, Lectures on Significant Tendencies in Contemporary Letters," (Claremont, California: Scripps College, 1930), footnote p. 17.

[9] Matthew Josephson, Zola and His Time, (The Macaulay Company, 1928), p. 204.

previously) is based upon biological determinism as was the naturalism of Zola, founder of the naturalistic movement in literature. Not all naturalistic writers have placed their emphasis so strictly upon biological aspects. Zola claimed Balzac and Flaubert as his predecessors. Balzac depicted the gamut of his society sparing nothing for the sake of morality nor beauty. Yet he moved in a culture of Catholicism; his detail may have borne marks of naturalism, but with his philosophy it was not so. Zola adopted the objective method of observation and the habit of meticulous documentation that had been the techniques of Flaubert, yet Flaubert was a more sensitive being, a conservative who objected to Zola's claim to be his literary heir. Flaubert's naturalism was devoted to the psychological study of individual characters. The Goncourt brothers were naturalistic writers in the time of Zola. The latter admired their ability to achieve bold relief in their novels through the use of rare and exceptional cases, but their refinement and artificiality palled him.

Zola, like Taine, believed that man is inseparable from his environment. In writing his novels he considered himself to be conducting "experiments" in which he placed characters within a given environment then endeavored to determine how they would of necessity react in it. The influence of Darwinism had come to him indirectly via the writings of Claude Bernard, who wrote: "We take men from the hands of the physiologist solely ... to solve scientifically the question of

how men behave in society."[10]

Zola's style was ponderous and lacking in skill. The multitudes of his characters were dwarfed by greater emphasis upon the study of their environments. He didn't possess the brilliance of a great literary artist, nor was he, actually, out-spoken in his naturalism. However in carrying out his theories the school of younger men who followed him sought to their most sordid extremes the implications of biological determinism. Zola saw to its completion the denuding of his naturalism; he saw it debased and made devoid of artistry while he yet lived. It remained for other men to retrace the path that Zola had begun, to rediscover naturalism and to elevate it by new means to artistic levels.

In general, although Zola's method has suffered from excesses in the writings of some who followed him, the principles he established in theory and by demonstration remain until today the best bases for the evaluation of naturalism, and the soundest standard for a general definition of the term.

After deliberate weighing and evaluating of available criteria of naturalism the writer of this thesis has reduced their number to two basic elements: I A deterministic philosophy, II. Scientific method. Both criteria are to be elaborated upon at some length.

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10. As quoted by Parrington, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 323.

I A DETERMINISTIC PHILOSOPHY

Naturalism is to be distinguished from realism by the fact that the former is a philosophy, the latter merely a method in itself. Determinism as a philosophy may make its chief concern any one or more of several fields in human experience. It has been noted that Zola emphasized biological determinism; his studies of heredity and environment became sociological in their import. Several modern American authors, of whom Dreiser is one, cleave more closely to the broader mechanistic philosophy of Flaubert. Many have concerned themselves mainly with economic determinism. Few have explored the possibilities of philosophic determinism, yet there is no reason why they should not. All deterministic philosophies have in common the supposition that the will of man is not free; he is subject to the pressures imposed by his environment and does not anywhere exist outside of the given environment.

II SCIENTIFIC METHOD: (1) Detachment in the handling of data. The naturalist possesses insight that is not allowed of strict objectivism which "admits of nothing occult." Granted a philosophic perspective the scientist must possess insight. The text should benefit by the enrichment of a fuller understanding--not merely the exterior reporting of facts--without being tainted by the author's own emotional coloring. Impersonal treatment of data is requisite.

(2) Observation without exploitation of fact. The naturalistic writer does not make of his writing a tract, a vehicle for the distribution of propaganda.

(3) Documentation. It was the custom, especially with the French novelists, to enrich their work and to increase its authenticity by excessive documentation by word of mouth and direct from nature. As history concerns itself with the past through written records, naturalism is of the present, documented by experience itself and by observation.

(4) "Micro-technique." The emphasis is upon close, methodical detail set forth with the thoroughness of a microscope; nothing is spared. Naturalism is lacking in the inhibitions of artificial modesty. Whatever concerns the subject at hand is inspected unsparingly because the field of naturalism is the whole of life.

PITFALLS IN THE WAY OF NATURALISM

There are certain pitfalls not easily avoided by naturalistic writers. Indeed, some have been so often visited as to have been popularly accepted (inconsistently so) as regular attributes of the way of writing.

(1) Partisanism. Many writers have begun their careers rightly enough only to fall victims of their all too obvious sympathies. They half believe in determinism, yet in wishing for another way of life turn reformers to change the ways of man. Zola's later works reveal this weakness in him, much to the detriment of his art. Zola's American disciple Frank Norris was rapidly succumbing to similar temptation at the time of his sudden death.

(2) Grotesques. Many authors, in carrying through what they believe to be a thorough and scientific study of a

trait in its relation to the individual and his environment, create warped, abnormal creatures, non-existent in life who are huge demonstrations of a single emotion. Examples are Norris' McTeague, Zola's Nana, and Dreiser's Jennie Gerhart. Balanced personalities are rare and do not seem to appeal to naturalistic writers.

(3) Over-emphasis of the ugly and sordid. This is perhaps a temporary reaction. Victorian romanticism had become over-prudish. Naturalism, selecting as it might from the whole of experience, easily established a morbid sex fixation. Likewise a smug Victorian age did not admit of social and economic ills. Naturalism, in accepting a self-appointed mission to expose them, resorted to harsh detail to shock people out of their complacency.

(4) Fatalism. Naturalistic writers seem to assume readily an over-pessimistic attitude which amounts to fatalism. Thomas Hardy is often labled a naturalist, yet should be questioned on this score because fatalism pre-supposes a "world of malignant chance."[11] The world of naturalism according to its philosophy, is not malignant, but indifferent to man.

(5) Ironical twist: Fate mocks man. This could not be so because naturalism based upon determinism assumes only the working out of natural laws. Certain conditions produce certain predictable results. Man does not proceed unknowingly to be snapped back by a cruel fate, even if at times within man's

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[11] Parrington, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 324.

short perspective it might seem so.

SUMMARY

In order that the purpose of this thesis be accomplished: the evaluation of the naturalism of Stephen Crane, it is first necessary to establish a working definition for naturalism. This is best accomplished, the writer feels, accompanied by a brief preliminary survey of the historical backgrounds of the term in philosophy, to be linked with the entrance of the term into literature.

There have been several types of naturalistic philosophies propounded at various times in history. Democritus and the Greek atomists taught a theory of materialistic mechanism. They reduced the worlds, both of matter and thought, to mere atomic structure.

Spinoza, the philosophic naturalist, asserted that only the infinite could be reality. God was at the vital center of his naturalism.

The dynamic naturalism of Aristotle and Santayana makes happy union of man's material world and the unknown that lies beyond.

Rousseau advocated the return from devastating artificialities of the civilized world to natural man.

Emerson urged a return to naturalness in the thinking of man. His was psycho-naturalism.

Modern scientific realism began with the biological determinism of Darwin and Spencer and the economic determinism

of Marx. It was out of these theories that naturalism in literature was born.

Emile Zola was the first user of the term naturalism in connection with literature, and the meaning he established has survived to become the main basis of critical definitions.

The criteria of naturalism are a deterministic philosophy and scientific method. In determinism the emphasis may be concentrated upon any one or more of the mediums of human experience: biological, sociological, economic, philosophic, etc. The characteristics of scientific method are: detachment in the handling of data, observation without exploitation of fact, documentation, and "micro-technique."

Certain pitfalls to be avoided which have come to be traditional earmarks of naturalism are: partisanism, grotesques, over-emphasis of the ugly and sordid, fatalism, and the ironical twist.

It is against the definition as worked out in this chapter that the naturalism of Stephen Crane is to be evaluated.

CHAPTER II

EUROPEAN INFLUENCES

Emile Zola is usually credited with being the originator of naturalism in literature. He was, at least, the first to distinguish his writings by the name; and in his essay Le Roman Expérimental he defined his use of the term naturalism and discussed critically the new school of writing at some length. Zola's was a biological naturalism, based upon the philosophy of determinism. His work attracted followers in France, Germany, Russia, and also in the Scandinavian countries; and in all of these lands naturalism found ready minds to grow in.

There had been predecessors of Zola: notable among them was the French realist Balzac (1799-1850); there were also the later nineteenth century contemporaries Flaubert, de Maupassant, and the brothers de Goncourt. However none of their writings were so thoroughly devoid of romanticism, so consistently deterministic as were Zola's, nor had the name of naturalism been claimed by them. Zola, more than any before him, delighted in accuracy of detail, in depiction of the honest picture. His senses were keen; especially was he interested in reporting smells and wafting them into the memories of his readers, pungently, or with acridity. He gained a reputation for having the sharpest nose in Europe. Zola brought the stench of Paris slums to his readers, together with the lush extravagances of the rich. He turned out book after book, never

veering from his course. If he deviated at all from naturalism it was because there was also the social reformer, along with the studious reporter within him. True naturalism is consistently objective, disinterested, although it borders upon pessimism.

Crane had read Zola; in fact he didn't care for his work. Thomas Beer reports the manner in which Zola's influence was felt: a peculiar, negative sort of way, which, he infers, may have been a primary factor in the germination of Crane's Red Badge of Courage.

> "Then he (Crane) was suddenly absorbed in some kind of research. He raided piles of old magazines in the studio of Corwin Kopp Linson and complained to the illustrator that nobody had written anything worth reading about the Civil War. He dropped in, one Sunday, at the house of Mrs. Armstrong... and borrowed the Century's "Battles and Leaders" after her father had assured him that these were accurate. One afternoon he was idle in the room of William Dallgren, watching Dallgren sketch Acton Davies when Davies tossed him Emile Zola's "Le Debacle," in a translation. Davies was a round youth who doted on Zola and when Crane slung the book aside he was annoyed.
>
> "I suppose you could have done it better?"
>
> "Certainly," said Crane.
>
> On April 2nd he sent back "Battles and Leaders of the Civil War" to Mrs. Armstrong with a note: "Thank you very much for letting me keep these so long. I have spent ten nights writing a story of the war on my own responsibility but I am not sure that my facts are real and the book won't tell me what I want to know so I must do it all over again I guess." This is the birth notice of "The Red Badge of Courage."[1]

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[1] Thomas Beer, Stephen Crane, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1927), p. 97-98.

Beer does not state that Davies' remark instigated the writing of The Red Badge of Courage, however Blankenship, whose source beyond doubt is Beer, tends to give the known facts that interpretation.

> --One day Crane read Zola's great war novel La Debacle. He did not care much for the book, and a sarcastic challenge from one of its admirers may have stung him into writing The Red Badge of Courage.[2]

Whatever may be the truth of the matter it is quite definitely established that Crane made no conscious nor direct effort to imitate Zola in any way. Beer quotes Crane as criticizing: "'Zola is a sincere writer but--is he much good? He hangs one thing to another and his story goes along but I find him pretty tiresome.'"[3]

Ludwig Lewisohn in The Story of American Literature likens Crane's work more to the "consistent naturalism" of the German, Arno Holz[4] (1863-1929): "Crane, like Arno Holz, imitated neither the passion nor the pity of Zola, but restricted himself to a cold and exact rendition of proletarion life and circumstance."[5] However, let it not be misconstrued that Holz was in any way an influence on Crane. He was

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[2] Russell Blankenship, American Literature (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1931), p. 523.

[3] Beer, op. cit., p. 148.

[4] See Appendix.

[5] Ludwig Lewisohn, The Story of American Literature (New York: the Modern Library, 1939), p. 319.

not. The work of this comparatively obscure German author, as far as the writer of this thesis can determine, has yet to be translated into English. Crane was no scholar. It is doubtful that he ever heard of Holz much more so that he read any of the latter's work in German. Never-the-less, unknown to each other, the two men were writing and thinking along similar lines--all of which proves, perhaps, only that they were products of a time.

Crane had read Flaubert's Salammbo, and although he claimed not to care much for the book, its vivid style so full of color may have had its reiterations in his own work.[6]

As for Balzac, Crane had once insisted to Conrad "to be told in particular detail all about the Comédie Humaine, its contents, its scope, its plan, and its general significance, together with a critical description of Balzac's style."[7] Conrad was persuaded to talk the whole of a long evening upon the subject. Crane was curious; perhaps he felt in this manner he might be spared the effort of reading Balzac for himself. He gave little time for reading.

He seemed to have had an especial dislike for the English authors which concentrated itself upon Robert Louis Stevenson.[8] In general he approached his career as a writer with more prejudices than favorites among the list wherein

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[6] Beer, op. cit., p. 55.

[7] Joseph Conrad, Introduction (Beer, Stephen Crane) p. 16.

[8] Beer, op. cit., p. 55.

was contained his slight familiarity with literature.

Crane's principal influence among European writers was the Russian, Count Leo Tolstoy. Comparatively speaking it would seem that the former's acquaintance with the world's great literature was exceedingly slight. However, it is not difficult to find substantiation for the fact that he was well acquainted with at least three major works of Tolstoy. Crane "asserted that Count Tolstoy was the world's foremost writer."[9]

Parrington says of The Red Badge of Courage: "It was a tour de force, inspired by Zola's Le debacle, but more by Tolstoi--War and Peace and perhaps Sebastopol."[10] Beer uses the words of Crane himself regarding another novel: "Tolstoy's 'Anna Karenina' was 'too long because he had to stop and preach but its a bully book'".[11]

Indeed Crane's intense admiration for the great Russian had led him to imitate, in part, perhaps subconsciously, his very manner of writing. This acceptance was not entire by any means. There was much which belonged to Tolstoy's very nature to which Crane's temperament was diametrically opposed. He had no patience with the length of War and Peace; especially did he object to the philosophizing which Tolstoy found a necessary ingredient of his literature. "He adored Tolstoy the

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[9] Loc. cit.

[10] Vernon Louis Parrington, Main Currents in American Thought, (New York: Harcourt Brace and Company, 1930), Vol. III, 1860-1920 "The Beginnings of Critical Realism in America," p. 328.

[11] Beer, op. cit., p. 157.

superb and ruthless artist but for Tolstoy the emotional pedagogue, the pilgrim of redemption, he had no use."[12]

From a purely dimensional point of view they are terribly unequal. Tolstoy is hardly less than a genius in his depiction of mankind on a gigantic canvas where seems to pulsate the whole of life. He paints men and women alike: individuals; yet they take their places in a great on-pouring stream of human life. Crane is a pigmy before such as he, yet brilliant, clear as the crackle-flash of lightning against the night.

One finds in the battle scenes of *War and Peace* a style and tone more closely akin to those, achieved by Crane than elsewhere among the latter's predecessors. The impressionistic experience of Rostov as a member of the Russian army in combat against Napoleon greatly suggests the later-written ordeal of Henry Fleming in *The Red Badge of Courage*, or of the soldier in *An Episode of War*:

> "'Where our men were, where were the French, he did not know. All around him there was no one.
>
> Getting his leg free he stood up. 'Which side, where now was that line that had so sharply divided the two armies?' he asked himself, and could not answer. 'Hasn't something gone wrong with me? Do such things happen, and what ought one to do in such cases?' he wondered as he was getting up. But at that instant he felt as though something superfluous was hanging on his left arm. The wrist seemed not to belong to it. He looked at his hand, care-

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12. *Loc. cit.*

fully searching for blood on it.' 'Come, here are some men,' he thought joyfully, seeing some men running towards him. 'They will help me!' In front of these men ran a single figure in a strange shako and blue coat, with a swarthy sunburnt face and a hooked nose. Then came two men and many more were running up behind. One of them said some strange words, not Russian. Between some similar figures in similar shakoes behind stood a Russian hussar. He was being held by the arms; behind him they were holding his horse, too.

'It must be one of ours taken prisoner.... Yes. Surely they couldn't take me, too? What sort of men are they? 'Rostov was still wondering unable to believe his own eyes. 'Can they be the French?' He gazed at the approaching French and although only a few seconds before he had been longing to get at these Frenchmen and to cut them down their being so near seemed to him now so awful that he could not believe his eyes. 'Who are they? What are they running for? Can it be to me? Can they be running to me? *Me*, whom everyone's so fond of?' he recalled his mother's love, the love of his family and his friends, and the enemy's intention of killing him seemed impossible. 'But they may even kill me.' For more than ten seconds he stood, not moving from the spot, nor grasping his position. The foremost Frenchman with hook nose was getting so near that he could see the expression of his face. And the excited alien countenance of the man, who was running so lightly and breathlessly towards him with his bayonet lowered, terrified Rostov. He snatched up his pistol and instead of firing with it, flung it at the Frenchman and ran to the bushes with all of his might. Not with the feeling of doubt and conflict with which he had moved at the Enns bridge did he now run, but with the feeling of a hare fleeing from the dogs. One unmixed feeling of fear for his young, happy life took possession of his whole being. Leaping rapidly over the hedges with the same impetuosity with which he used to run when he played games, he flew over the field, now and then turning his pale, goodnatured, youthful face, and a chill of horror ran down his spine.[13]

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[13] Count Leo Tolstoy, (Constance Garnett, translation), *War and Peace*, (New York: The Modern Library), p. 170-171.

Tolstoy relates the incident mainly from the subjective point of view. One is admitted into the consciousness of the soldier. The strokes with which Crane has created similar scenes are in some ways even more deft than the work of his master. There is perhaps a staccato quality to Crane's work. He is brief, even more vividly impressionistic, yet coldly objective and aloof from emotional involvement with his work.

The lieutenant of An Episode of War is less self-conscious than Rostov. His mental state, almost unknown to himself is subtly reflected in his physical surroundings.

> "suddenly the lieutenant cried out and looked quickly at the man near him as if he suspected it was a case of personal assault. The others cried also when they saw blood upon the lieutenant's sleeve.
>
> He had winced like a man stung, swayed dangerously, and then straightened. The sound of his breathing was plainly audible. He looked sadly, mystically, over the breastwork at the green face of a wood, where now were many little puffs of white smoke. During this moment the men about him gazed statue-like and silent, astonished and awed by this catastrophe which happened when catastrophes were not expected--when they had leisure to observe it.
>
> As the lieutenant stared at the wood, they too swung their heads, still silent, contemplated the distant forest as if their minds were fixed upon the mystery of a bullet's journey.
>
> The officer had, of course, been compelled to take his sword in his left hand. He did not hold it by the hilt. He gripped it at the middle of the blade awkwardly. Turning his eyes from the hostile wood, he looked at the sword as he held it there, and seemed puzzled as to what to do with it, where to put it. In short, this

> weapon had of a sudden become a strange thing to him. He looked at it in a kind of stupifaction, as if he had been endowed with a trident, a sceptre, or a spade.
>
> Finally he tried to sheathe it...
>
> But at this instant the men, the spectators, awoke from their stone-like poses and crowded forward sympathetically. The orderly-sergeant took the sword and tenderly placed it in the scabbard. At the time, he leaned nervously backward, and did not allow even his finger to brush the body of the lieutenant. A wound gives strange dignity to him who bears it. Well men shy from this new and terrible majesty. It is as if the wounded man's hand is upon the curtain which hangs before the revelations of all existence--the meaning of ants, potentates, wars, cities, sunshine, snow, a feather dropped from a bird's wing; and the power of it sheds radiance upon a bloody form, and makes the other men understand sometimes that they are little.....
>
> There were others who proffered assistance. One timidly presented his shoulder and asked the lieutenant if he cared to lean upon it, but the latter waved him away mournfully. He wore the look of one who knows he is the victim of a terrible disease and understands his helplessness. He again stared over the breastwork at the forest, and then, turning, went slowly rearward. He held his right wrist tenderly in his left arm as if the wounded arm was made of very brittle glass.
>
> And the men in silence stared at the wood, then at the departing lieutenant; then at the wood, then at the lieutenant.[14]

The short piece: An Episode of War is superb in its entirety. The writer would place it among the very best work left by Crane. It is a temptation not to include the whole sharply drawn objective sketch in this thesis. However it is easily available to readers elsewhere, (n.b.: footnote #14.)

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[14] Stephen Crane, (Carl Van Doran, editor), Twenty Stories (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1940), "An Episode of War," p. 454-459.

Crane is mainly descriptive in his objectivity. He is sensitive to the implications of action, but unlike Tolstoy, Crane did not come to know the workings of the human mind except as it was reflected in behavior. Behavior, truly, is the result of psychological processes, however it is an outward manifestation, is objective, and may be learned by observation, dealt with descriptively. Whereas, the psychological process evoking behavior is subjective, may only be ascertained by insight, and requires a much keener understanding of the human organism.

The Red Badge of Courage, which is a brilliant, purely imagined description of how a boy, like Crane himself, might act when confronted with war, comes closest of all Crane's writings to the subjective method, and contains the finest exposition of the workings of the human mind together with human behavior under trying circumstances. His success here is mainly due to the fact that he has projected himself into the imagined situation. In contradiction to Crane's usual method of writing The Red Badge of Courage is not an example of objective naturalism.

> His (Crane's) mind had gone swinging back to war in recoil from failure in realities. ... he was in full flight from the codes of naturalism... Flight took him inevitably to his first passion. He made games of battle when he was a child. He was always playing mentally and all the force of imagination dragged at him in his very genuine despair of methods to release the hiding vigour of his brain. He could stand through nights in a blizzard of late March to write "Men in the Storm" or sleep in a Bowery shelter to get at the truth of "An Experiment in Misery" but the emotions of a boy in battle he must find for himself, in himself, and the birth of the book was travail incomprehensible to men who have never hunted in them-

> selves passions and the flood of acts to which they are alien.[15]

Young men remain his most realistic characters. He met immediately with difficulties when he attempted other characterizations in which he could have no actual nor intimately imagined part. These difficulties may be attributed in large extent to his already-mentioned lack of knowledge concerning the human mind. This is particularly apparent, to a distressing degree, in his efforts to portray nice young women. His attitude then becomes that of a self-conscious adolescent boy, and he produces Marjory of *Active Service*, who is sister to scores of romantic young things in many another long-forgotten Victorian novel. He is in closer sympathy with the poor, despised, social out-cast. He did well with *Maggie*.

The great dissimilarity between Crane and Tolstoy, to return to the main discussion, is a difference of magnitude. This statement is true in more than one sense. It has been pointed out that Crane was most successful in the creation of characters who were essentially projections of himself and his own experience. This was his limitation. Tolstoy's pages are filled with men and women who live in the mind of the reader, human beings from all walks of life, of all ages and experience. Not only are his writings populous, they are voluminous.

The finest of Crane's longer works, *The Red Badge of Courage* hardly possesses the length nor the scope to pass as a novel. Possibly it was not within Crane's abilities to sustain an

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[15] Beer, *op. cit.*, p. 98-99.

artistic effect of the whole through a lengthy, complex and detailed piece of work; at any rate, to make the attempt was not within the range of his temperament. Anything except bare facts, effectively, strikingly presented was superfluous to him; it bored him in another's writing; he avoided it in his own. This characteristic of his nature is forcefully revealed by a comparison of his unusual poetry with that of any other writer of his own or any period in literature. The same terse imagery, the vivid brevity of expression is the essence of his prose.

Joseph Conrad, the English novelist commends Crane's very lack of the all-submerging magnitude which Tolstoy creates. He uses as examples for reference The Red Badge of Courage and the very experience of Rostov in War and Peace which has been previously quoted from in this chapter.

(These two pieces of writing have much that is comparable. They both deal with the maiden experience of a boy under fire. Both lads experience fear and run from the battle.16)

> ...in Tolstoy's book the subtle presentation of Rostov's squadron under fire for the first time is a mere episode lost in a mass of other matter, like a handful of pebbles in a heap of sand. I could not see the relevancy. Crane was concerned with elemental truth only; and in any case I think that as an artist he is noncomparable. He dealt with what is enduring, and was the most detached of men.
>
> That is why his book is short. Gems are small.[17]

It would seem that out of the great mass of material presented by Tolstoy, Crane's fancy was captured by brief bits,

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16. Stephen Crane, The Red Badge of Courage, (London: The New Library edition, Jonathan Cape, 1937), p. 87-91.

17. Ibid., (preface by Joseph Conrad), p. 13-14.

which he salvaged for his own. Long, over-drawn descriptions of Russian society life, whole chapters of philosophizing remained as if he had not touched them, but Tolstoy's realism of war emerged again from the pen of Stephen Crane. The latter wrote of new wars, in different words, yet, how alike they were to one another! The following selection is from War and Peace; Crane might well have written it, so much are the tone and color his own.

> Pierre went up into the battery, where he had spent over an hour; and found no one left of that little fraternal group that had accepted him as one of themselves. There were many dead there, whom he had not seen before. But several he recognized. The boy-officer was still sitting huddled up in a pool of blood at the edge of the earth wall. The red-faced, merry soldier was still twitching convulsively, but they did not carry him away.
>
> Pierre ran down the slope.
>
> 'Oh, now they will stop it, now they will be horrified at what they have done!' Thought Pierre, aimlessly following the crowds of stretchers moving off to the battle fields.
>
> But the sun still stood high behind the veil of smoke, and in front, and even more so to the left, about Semyonovskoye, there was still a turmoil seething in the smoke; and the roar of cannon and musketry, far from slackening, grew louder and more desperate, like a man putting all his force into one deafening outcry as a last despairing effort.[18]

In several rather small matters of detail the two writers are found to be strangely similar and suggestive of each other. Very likely what Tolstoy had said was embedded very deeply within the subconscious thinking of Crane. Experience, especially that of a pleasing nature, once impressed upon the

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18. Tolstoy, op. cit., p. 753.

brain becomes a part of the individual. Later following an assimilating and sifting process he uses it as his own. It is not strange, then, that Crane's pen should occasionally find inspiration in Tolstoy.

Perhaps the most pathetic creature Crane ever depicted is A Dark Brown Dog,[19] the small animal who made friends with a child of the slums, only to be flung from the window to a horrible death, against roof-tops below, by the child's enraged and drunken father. A mere suggestion of the same little brown dog is flashed before the attention of the reader during a vast panorama of battle in War and Peace.

> Another time the attention of all was attracted ty a little brown dog with its tail in the air, who had come, no one knows from where, and was running about fussily in front of the ranks. All at once a cannon ball fell near it, and it squealed and dashed away with its tail between its legs![20]

Crane's "dark-brown dog" trots into literature in a similar unannounced manner. The dog in each case inspires pathos in the sympathy of the reader.

> After a time, a little dark brown dog came trotting with an intent air down the sidewalk. A short rope was dragging from his neck. Occasionally he trod upon the end of it and stumbled.
>
> He stopped opposite the child and the two regarded each other. The dog hesitated for a moment, but presently he made some little advances with his tail. The child put out his hand and called him. In an apologetic manner the dog came close, and the two had an interchange of friendly pattings and

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19. Stephen Crane, A Dark Brown Dog, (Maggie and Other Stories, New York: The Modern Library, 1933), p. 149-160.

20. Tolstoy, op. cit., p. 763.

> waggles. The dog became more enthusiastic with each moment of the interview, until with his gleeful caperings he threatened to overturn the child. Whereupon the child lifted his hand and struck the dog upon the head.
>
> This thing seemed to overpower and astonish the little dark-brown dog, and wounded him to the heart. He sank down in despair at the child's feet. When the blow was repeated, together with an admonition in childish sentences, he turned over upon his back, and held his paws in a peculiar manner. At the same time with his ears and his eyes he offered a small prayer to the child.[21]

Leo Tolstoy and Stephen Crane, among their common sympathies, shared a genuine love of animals, especially horses. Beer, in his autobiography, infers the latter's fondness for horses, and the fact that he was an enthusiastic and accomplished horseman.[22] Wherever either of the two men have occasion for reference to horses in their writings an almost tender regard is apparent.

Tolstoy writes:

> 'Be good to the little horse! the Als~~t~~atian said with simplehearted good-nature to Rostov, when the horse was handed to the hussar.
>
> Rostov smiling, soothed the dragoon, and gave him money.[23]

...And again, he treats at some length the mount of the Tsar of Russia.

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[21] Crane, op. cit., p. 149-150.

[22] Beer, op. cit., pp. 48, 116, 219; also Introduction to same book, by Joseph Conrad, p. 21-22.

[23] Tolstoy, op. cit., p. 233.

> 'Glad to do our best,' roared the soldiers. The Tsar's horse reared at the unexpected sound. This horse, who had carried the Tsar at reviews in Russia, bore his rider here on the field of Austerlitz, patiently enduring the heedless blows of his left foot, and prickled up his ears at the sound of shots as he had done on the reviewing ground with no comprehension of the significance of these sounds, nor of the nearness of the raven horse of Emperor Francis, nor of all that was thought and felt that day by the man who rode upon his back.[24]

When Crane, on occasion, mentions a horse it is with great gentleness and understanding. He wrote a short tale, Horses -- One Dash, which purports to be his own true adventure.[25] The selections given here from that source are Crane's own words in speaking of his experience, and of his attitude toward "the little horse" who was his companion in it.

> They rode forward again. Once the American's horse shied and breathed quiveringly at something which he saw or imagined in the darkness, and the rider drew a steady patient rein and leaned over to speak tenderly as if he were addressing a frightened woman.[26]

...Later in the same story:

> ...The little horse had evidently heard them coming. He stood facing them, his ears cocked forward, his eyes bright with welcome.[27]

Two men make their perilous escape, desperate, depending upon their steeds for every last ounce of strength because their very lives hang in the balance:

> ...Richardson, too, cried madly to the black horse.
>
> The spirit of the horse responded to these calls, and quivering and breathing heavily, he made

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[24] Ibid., p. 256-257.

[25] Beer, op. cit., p. 116.

[26] Stephen Crane, Horses--One Dash (collection Twenty Stories, New York. Alfred A. Knopf, 1940), p. 344.

[27] Ibid., p. 353

> a great effort, a sort of final rush, not for himself apparently, but because he understood that his life's sacrifice, perhaps, had been invoked by these two men who cried to him in the universal tongue. Richardson had no sense of appreciation at this time--he was too frightened--but often now he remembers a certain black horse.[28]

Although in style and tastes Crane found much that was common with his own in Tolstoy's writing, the basic philosophies of the two men were most unlike. The faith of Tolstoy pervades his work. He devotes whole chapters to a philosophy that is based upon a belief in an All-powerful, unifying and motivating creative force that controls the universe, including man. "Man is the creation of an Almighty, All-good, and All-wise God."[29] Such an Ideal transcends that of freedom of will in man.

> But though towards the end of the battle men felt all the horror of their actions, though they would have been glad to cease, some unfathomable mysterious force still led them on, and the artillery men--the third of them left--soaked with sweat, grimed with powder and blood, and panting with weariness, still brought the charges, loaded, aimed, and lighted the match; and the cannon balls flew as swiftly and cruelly from each side and crushed human flesh, and kept up the fearful work, which was done not at the will of men, but at the will of him who sways men and worlds.[30]

Through greatest evidences of tragedy Tolstoy maintains a calm that is the result of a belief in the long-range good of events, the entirety of which man is too small and too brief to comprehend.

Stephen Crane was the son of a Methodist minister. During his youth he had received an over-dose of religion, and

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[28] Ibid., p. 357.

[29] Tolstoy, op. cit., 1134

[30] Ibid., p. 771

later, reacted away from it. While Tolstoy's philosophy was built upon calm faith in the all-pervading Power behind the universe, Crane's philosophy, Thomas Beer would have his readers believe, was based upon fear. Beer develops this thesis throughout his biography. Young Stephen's first training, received at the knee of his mother, was that he should not be afraid of anything. The idea, once instilled in his mind, took root and eventually he did face bravely all the dangers of his small world, to more than satisfy his parent. It was she, then, who feared for him. Her lesson on fear led him to be afraid more than all else of fear itself. It is The Red Badge of Courage, perhaps, of all Crane's writings, which is most nearly a biography of the mind of its author. The young soldier, too, whom Crane portrayed, was most afraid of his own fear. A bleeding wound, to him, was the "red badge of courage" which he envied others for wearing.

Henry Fleming, who fled the battle unscathed, was ashamed and did not answer when a tattered, twice-wounded soldier asked him, "'Where yeh hit?'"

> The youth fell back in the procession until the tattered soldier was not in sight. Then he started to walk on with the others.
>
> But he was amid wounds. The mob of men was bleeding. Because of the tattered soldier's question he now felt that his shame could be viewed. He was continually casting sidelong glances to see if the men were contemplating the letters of guilt he felt burning in his brow.
>
> At times he regarded the wounded soldiers in an envious way. He conceived persons with torn bodies to be particularly happy. He wished that he, too, had a wound, a red badge of courage.[31]

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[31] Stephen Crane, The Red Badge of Courage, (London: Jonathan Cape, 1937), p. 111.

Of Stephen Crane's own training in childhood his biographer writes:

> ...it was no part of Mrs. Crane's theory that a child of hers should be afraid of anything. He was told to stay on the horse and not to be scared. Somebody threw a ball of hard rubber into his delicate hands with thin bones; Mrs. Crane wiped his sapphire eyes and told him he mustn't cry. She took him to religious frolics at Ocean Grove where he saw the waves from the beach and had an atrocious dream of black riders on black horses charging at him from the long surf up the shore and so woke screaming night after night. But always he must not cry.[32]

Later, when Jonathan Crane died, "terror closed in on his last child."

> People came from everywhere to lament Jonathan Crane. Some country wife stood in the kitchen and sang long hymns. Townley and George and Will and Edmund (Stephen's brothers) were in black clothes; his mother sat in the darkened parlour surrounded by whispering women and somehow one of Stephen's hands brushed the cold silver handle of the coffin; the full horror of Christian death smashed on the lank child's consciousness. "We tell kids that heaven is just across the gaping grave and all that bosh and then we scare them to glue with flowers and white sheets and hymns. We ought to be crucified for it! ... I have forgotten nothing about this, not a damned iota, not a shred."[33]

As the child became young man the wild terrors of his mind were put down, yet the conditioning of his youth remained locked away to influence him in his writings, and to forever isolate him from finding comforting warmth within the bosom of the church.

> Let it be stated that the mistress of this boy's mind was fear. His search in the aesthetic was governed by terror as that of tamer men is governed

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32. Beer, op. cit., p. 38-39.

33. Ibid., p. 41-42.

> by the desire of woman. "Maggie" had represented the terror of an environment tinged by social judgment. In all the Mexican and Texan sketches appears, as in "The Red Badge of Courage," a vision of man's identity faced by its end, by incomprehensible death. One gets the solid courage of the marshal of Yellow Sky who shoves annihilation from him by a simple statement; the rogue of "A Man and Some Others" dies easily because he is bound by contract to defend his flock. In the true story "Horses" and the fanciful "Five White Mice" one sees Crane himself recording his own pulse before a shadow which he refuses to kneel and worship. He could be afraid, and afraid with all the quivering imagination of an artist--here stood the great death and here mentally or in flesh, stood he. But his recording of the state is never more than civilly sympathetic.[33]

Beer infers that Crane's unusual restraint, almost lack of sympathy in face of emotional situations is due to his fundamental inability to deal with them. Were he to relax for an instant his stiffness of bearing he might dissolve altogether into an orgy of emotionalism and terror. Crane is intrigued, as so often happens, by the source of his fears and reverts time and again in his writings to situations involving it.

One of Tolstoy's characters is able to express the very emotion which in Crane is so overpowering that it must be forever held within the bounds of terrible silence.

> 'Can this be death?' Prince Audrey wondered, with an utterly new, wistful feeling, looking at the grass, and the wormwood and at the thread of smoke coiling from the rotating top. 'I can't die, I don't want to die, I love life, I love this grass and earth and air...'[34]

Crane's characters do not face reality so subjectively nor do they ever show symptoms of hysteria. Usually the cool-

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[33] *Ibid.*, p. 117-118.

[34] Tolstoy, *op. cit.*, p. 764.

headed, aloof witness is the only one permitted expression at the coming of death. The world had rejected Maggie, and, with it, her own mother. Yet, upon the death of the girl, that woman is brought to say, "Oh, yes, I'll fergive her! I'll fergive her!"[35] in a voice that "arose like a scream of pain."

Crane seldom expresses any philosophy as such, in his writings. He liked Tolstoy the less for expressing his, and did not intend that he should err in the same way. However, the writer finds one passage in The Open Boat which would appear to be concerned with Crane's own philosophy of life.

> On the distant dunes were set many little black cottages, and a tall windmill reared above them...
>
> ...The boat was headed for the beach. The correspondent wondered if none ever ascended the tall wind-tower, and if then they never looked seaward. This tower was a giant, standing with its back to the plight of the ants. It represented in a degree, to the correspondent, the serenity of nature amid the struggles of the individual--nature in the wond, and nature in the vision of men. She did not seem cruel to him then, nor beneficent, nor treacherous, nor wise. But she was indifferent, flatly indifferent. It is perhaps plausible that a man in this situation, impressed with the unconcern of the universe, should see the innumerable flaws of his life, and have them taste wickedly in his mind, and wish for another chance. A distinction between right and wrong seems absurdly clear to him, then, in this new ignorance of the grave-edge, and he understands that if he were given another opportunity he would mend his conduct and his words, and be better and brighter during an introduction or at a tea.[36]

Crane, like all men, could not know the plan of the universe, yet he seemed to base his thinking upon one that was

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35. Stephen Crane, Twenty Stories, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1940) Maggie: A Girl of the Streets, p. 82.

36. Ibid, The Open Boat, p. 236.

indifferent to the struggle of mankind. Man, indeed, is enobled unto a heroic figure by maintaining his fight alone against an alien, indifferent nature. Crane himself held back with staunch, cool bravery against the "black terror" of the unknown. In his poetry that is seen clearly which is difficult to divine from his prose. Perhaps this is true because the poet dares speak more truth veiled in the symbolism of his art than he would reveal out-spokenly.

X

Should the wide world roll away,
Leaving black terror,
Limitless night,
Nor God, nor man, nor place to stand
Would be to me essential,
If thou and thy white arms were there,
And the fall to doom a long way.[37]

LXVII

God lay dead in heaven;
Angels sang the hymn of the end;
Purple winds went moaning,
Their wings dip-dripping
With blood
That fell upon the earth.
It, groaning thing,
Turned back and sank.
Then from the far caverns
Of dead sins
Came monsters, livid with desire.
They fought,
Wrangled over the world,
A morsel.
But of all sadness this was sad--
A woman's arms tried to shield
The head of a sleeping man
From the jaws of the final beast.[38]

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[37] Stephen Crane, The Collected Poems of Stephen Crane (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1932), p. 12: The Black Riders.

[38] *Ibid.*, p. 72.

SUMMARY

To summarize the European influences upon Stephen Crane it should be said that in spite of the coincidence that naturalism originated in France under the leadership of Zola, the latter influenced Crane little if any, although he was familiar with some of his work as well as that of Balzac and Flaubert. Crane's writing bears some resemblance to that of Arno Holz, the German, yet that, too, is coincidental because undoubtedly the work of Holz was not available to Crane. English writers offer little or no contribution to his work.

The main influence upon Crane was the Russian, Tolstoy, whose writings he enjoyed. Tolstoy tends toward naturalism, yet his novels are exceedingly long, complex, a number of threads interwoven. It is the Russian's writing upon war that influenced Crane--the actual battle scenes realistically done. The two men had common sympathies in regard to their love for animals. Tolstoy was by far the more versatile; his abilities extended beyond Crane's. Crane cannot portray woman realistically, as Tolstoy can. The latter possesses a warmth, a subjective closeness to life. Crane is aloof, objective. Their greatest difference is in their philosophies. Tolstoy delights to expound his at length: his faith is in an all-pervading Power governing the universe and man. Crane's philosophy is little expressed, but must be called from his work. His biographer, Thomas Beer, believes his life was motivated by a fear of life itself when confronted with the unknown. Crane preferred to

believe that the universe is indifferent to mankind. In this belief he is consistent with the principles of naturalism.

CHAPTER III

AMERICAN BACKGROUNDS

First evidence of realism in America began in a growth wholly independent of the more radical, pessimistic, European naturalism, which was contemporary with its appearance. The two were quite unlike in their backgrounds and altogether unrelated in their development.

Victorian America frowned with disapproval upon the European movement and upon its later American out-growths, as well.

> The prejudices against it (realism[1]) were many and robust. To most Victorians realism meant Zola, sex, and the exploitation of the animal, and all the pruderies of the Age of Innocence rose up in protest against defiling letters with such themes. The judgment of Aldrich's on realism --"A miasmatic breath blown from the slums--" was characteristic Yankee echo of Tennyson's condemnation," wallowing in the slough of Zolaism." All the high priests of the genteel rallied to combat such a desecration of literature, and when it knocked at the door of a respectable magazine in the person of Stephen Crane's Maggie the editor could do nothing else than turn it into the street. In the late nineties when Jude the Obscure appeared in one of the family magazines, even the great reputation of Hardy was reckoned a poor excuse for such an offense to morality.[2]

It was a different sort of realism that, in spite of these protests, first grew out of the very heart and soil of

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[1] Parrington refers here to the more extreme forms of realism, such as the type employed by Zola, defined in the thesis as naturalism. In the writings of many authorities, as in this instance, the terms realism and naturalism are used, to some extent, interchangeably.

[2] Vernon Louis Parrington, Main Currents in American Thought, (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1930), Vol. III, 1860-1920 "The Beginnings of Critical Realism in America," p. 237.

America herself. This realism began in the work of the local colorists, which was in its earlier expression "inclined to a romantic or idyllic coloring, but as it developed it came to rely more and more on the beauty of truth."[3] It also came to be found in the work of the sociological short story writers, and was encouraged in its development by James Russell Lowell, who, as editor of the Atlantic Monthly (1857-1861), found the realistic short story highly acceptable.[4]

Strangely enough, Bret Harte (1836-1902), himself a romanticist, in popularizing the local color short story laid the way for American realism. At the peak of his popularity (1872) the Atlantic Monthly contracted to pay him $10,000 for a year's work of twelve contributions. Previous to that time receipt of such a sum by an American author was unheard of. Harte's success was rapidly followed by that of a number of other sectionalists, many of whom went much farther than he toward the development of the realistic short story. The latter tended to glamourize the natural setting of the west, and develop local characters into romantic figures representing extremes in virtue and evil character. Often he made heroism shine forth in the social outcast: he "pandered to the common taste by discovering nuggets of pure gold in the dregs and outcasts of the mining camps."[5] In any case right was always triumphant in his highly colored, picturesque, and genuinely moving tales.

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3. Ibid., Vol. III, p. 238.

4. Loc. cit.

5. Ibid., p. 93.

Many of the writers who followed after him did not write so vividly, nor did they have such stories to tell, but the best of them depicted regional American life in carefully selected, subdued tones; they endeavored to portray accurately some phase of existence they knew, or to characterize a trait of their people. Such was the beginning of American realism. The fact that distinguished their work so definitely as a native product was that, for the first time in new world literature, writers were "unconcerned with European technique."[6] Often they attempted to reproduce the dialects of their people by use of phonetic spelling in direct quotations. This did not add to the artistic effect of the composition; it usually detracted considerably therefrom. However, even that was a step toward realism. The practice suffered a considerable vogue from which we are, even today, not thoroughly recovered.

The whole of the United States became finely broken up into literary sections, each of which came to be well known through the pens of its several champions. This change began to take place immediately following the Civil War. However a few signs of it were in evidence earlier. James Russell Lowell (1819-1891) had characterized the typical New Englander: Hosea Biglow, and with him started the impetus of that dreadful vogue of phonetic misspelling. Harriet Beecher Stowe's (1811-1896) Maine novels are evidence to the claim that she be considered the mother of American regionalism, just as George

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6. Ibid., p. 238.

Eliot was the mother of contemporary English regionalism.[7] Sarah Orne Jewett (1849-1909) and Mary E. Wilkins Freeman (1852-1930) are principal representatives of a large group which produced some exceedingly fine examples of local realism depicting "the decline of New England." Their art lay at a far extremity from that of Bret Harte. In his stories action predominated, his characterizations were bold cartoons after the manner of his master, Charles Dickens. These two ladies were authentic realists who wrote of the calm, grey, plains of life in studies that were deep and searching. Miss Jewett's work is characterized by accurate depiction, studied restraint; Mrs. Freeman darkens her pictures with a deeper pessimism.

Between these extremes of romanticism and realism were produced all manner of local color stories and sketches, the country over. Included among the writers were "Edward Eggleston in southern Indiana, George Washington Cable in New Orleans, Charles Egbert Craddock in eastern Tennessee, James Lane Allen in Kentucky, Octave Thamet in Arkansas,"[8] and others both widely read and obscure, too numerous to mention.

> In fixing attention on narrow and homely fields they were turning toward realism, for the charm of their work lay in fidelity to the _milieu_, the exact portrayal of character and setting. With the spread of an interest in the local the vogue of the strange and the remote declined and a quiet sobriety displaced the romantic. The way was being prepared for a more adequate realism....
>
> But that waited upon profound changes in the American outlook on life. In the seventies and

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[7] Robert L. Ramsay, _Short_ _Stories_ _of_ _America_, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1921), p. 7.

[8] Parrington, _op_. _cit_., p. 238.

> eighties conditions were not ripe for it and the naturalism that in France, Russia, Germany, and Scandinavia, was carrying everything before it, was still alien to the American temper. It was not so much that it offended our innate Puritanism as that it seemed to us belied by the open facts of American life. The psychology of dispersion still marked us. Although we were feverishly building great cities we were still emotionally a country people, far from urban minded. We still thought in terms of the slack earlier freedoms, uncritical of our ways, untroubled about the future. For the American born before the Civil War naturalism was impossible; his mind had not been shaped by the industrial city or come under the dominion of science. The traditional outlook on life was unchanged; he still clung to the old faith in the goodness of life in America. The intellectual revolution must be gone through with before naturalism should be at home in America, a native expression of native conditions, and it would then be a vehicle only for writers born and bred in the new city environment. In the meanwhile--in the genial years when the earlier optimisms still veiled the harsher realities of science and industrialism--the movement of realism got under way in the work of two distinguished craftsmen who, bred up in Victorian culture interpreted life in terms of the middle and upper classes.[9]

HENRY JAMES

DELUDED ROMANTICIST

In the closing sentence (quoted above) of introductory passages to his chapter on Victorian Realism Parrington refers to Henry James and William Dean Howells, both of whom, in a later period Stephen Crane came to know.

The first of them, Henry James (1843-1916), was hardly a realist at all but a deluded romanticist. All his life he sought after realism as he imagined it, only at his years' end to realize that his efforts had been in vain. He

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9. Ibid., p. 238-239.

was a very sensitive soul, who fled his native America to escape the vulgarities of the "Gilded Age." His god was culture, which he believed to be the sacred possession of generations of well-bred Europeans. Therein lay his fallacy which prevented him from ever seeing life clearly. The realities which he pursued existed only in his own imagination. He never penetrated to the core of ideal culture: it was non-existent; he left behind the environment of his native earth. His years were spent in the refining of his meticulous technique with which he drew sensitive word pictures in barely perceptible differences of color and tone. "Like modern scholarship he came to deal more and more with less and less,"[10] isolating himself farther and farther from the understanding of the people of America.

Enthroned as he was in the robes of culture, Henry James did, none the less, smile with kindliness and beneficence upon his small world and upon the young and struggling writers who came beneath his gaze.

Amy Lowell found in him a sympathetic friend, and one old enough in experience, at last, to know whence life had led him at a time too late for more than wistful backward looks.

> It was probably also in 1913 that Miss Lowell visited Henry James at Rye. When he heard that she hoped to be a writer, he took her away from the group round the tea table, out into the garden, where he strolled up and down with her, astonishing her with the frankness of his advice.
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> ...James was undoubtedly in that autumnal depression when one's best things are done, and nobody appreciates them - when one is so familiar

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[10] Ibid., p. 241.

> with them that they seem merely stale ... Now James had come to feel that all his works were futile: a tangle of temporal and local differences that revealed after all, nothing of the depths, references as fleeting as O. Henry's slang; flavors mistaken for essences; split hairs, not dissected anatomies. He had severed himself from the culture that had produced him, while the culture that he had tried to acquire was unattained.
>
> He determined to expiate his error; and Miss Lowell listened amazed to a fierce and bitter monologue, in which he confessed a complete failure, and warned her against expatriation. I have cut cut myself off from America, where I belonged, he said, 'and in England I am not really accepted. Don't make my mistake.'[11]

More than a decade before Stephen Crane, too, had entered into the sacred circle of friendship with Henry James while the two men were in England. James, thoroughly a gentleman, was incompatible with some of Crane's "Bohemian" friends, especially the rude, outspoken Harold Frederic. Crane's own vivid startling manner of writing may not always have pleased him. But, far apart as were the worlds of these two men, James admired his younger friend and recognized his talent. Thomas Beer speaks of Henry James.

> He sent to Stephen Crane, unasked, five manuscripts and invited an opinion, so he must have respected something in the weary impressionist. Being very old he said, "I loved him..." and that perhaps, was a convenient synthesis for a mind wanting to understand but not approving the vivid wayfarer.[12]

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[11] S. Foster Damon, Amy Lowell, A Chronicle With Extracts from her Correspondence, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1935), p. 212.

[12] Beer, op. cit., p. 236.

WILLIAM DEAN HOWELLS REALIST OF THE COMMONPLACE

In the person of William Dean Howells (1837-1920) was bridged the gap between the "genteel tradition" and the naturalism that would herald the coming of a new century. He was a native of the Ohio frontier, but, as a young man, was accepted into the older literary group in Boston. The years he spent under their influence left a lasting stamp upon his work, which might have evinced less restraint of expression and a broader point of view, had it not been so. In any case, Howells remains a realist, and although he seems overbound to morality and narrow in scope today, he was in the eyes of his own time daring in his realism, and for more than twenty years the leader in this field. His long list of novels are little read today; the average reader finds their well written, but commonplace uneventfulness tiresome. They are peopled with ordinary men and neurotic women, about whom the delicate trivial threads of the story are woven. Partly because of his training in literary proprieties, partly because of his idea of realism, Howells excluded from his work the great, basic crises in the testing of human weakness; he does not treat the cases of wayward beings who have

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been forced from the accepted paths of living.

Howells had postulated some ideas of his own concerning realism which he set forth in his book Criticism and Fiction (1894). He attributed the use of modern realism to pre-established sources of science and democracy. He believed realism to be the truthful handling of material. That which was most usual and commonplace came nearest to truth; therefore realism should concern itself with the average situation, the unusual and extreme were not to be treated. He felt, like most Victorians, that art must serve morality. Realism would reveal the essential dignity and worth of all life. "In America, at least, (Howell's opinion) realism must concern itself with the 'large cheerful average of health and success and happy life, for after all 'the more smiling aspects of life' are 'the more American.'"[13]

In strange contrast with these, his literary views, was his interest in the plight of the social outcast, and in the belabored workers in the slums and the factories of America. He held exceedingly liberal social views for his age. People were amazed and taken aback, when, after reading the works of Karl Marx, he embraced his teachings. He became the enemy of Capitalism, and made artful attack upon it in his two Utopian romances The Traveller from Altruria (1893) and Through the Eye of the Needle (1907).

His main literary influence seems to have been the been forced from the [illegible] of the [illegible].

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[13] Parrington, op. cit., p. 249.

Howells had doubtless some sense of this when con- [illegible] realism which he set forth in his book *Criticism and Fiction* (1891). He distinguished the new or modern realism, [illegible] of science and democracy. He believed realism to be the [illegible] of democracy. That which was [illegible] to truth; therefore realism should concern itself with the average situation, the ordinary character, what was to be typical. In fact, like most Victorians, [illegible] was more moralist. Realism would reveal the essential dignity and worth of all life. [illegible] American, although [illegible] would concern itself with the 'large cheerful average of health and success and happy life, for after all 'the more smiling aspects of life' are the more American.'13

In strong contrast with these, the literary views, [illegible] the [illegible] of [illegible], and [illegible] He held [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] his teachings. He became the [illegible] [illegible] upon it in his [illegible] *The [illegible]* (189[illegible]) and *[illegible] the [illegible] of the Public* (1907).

[illegible] formed in [illegible]

13. [illegible], op. cit., p. [illegible].

work of Jane Austin; the source of his theory is difficult to determine. He early read the works of French and Russian naturalists and left them, finding the material too raw for his digestion. Later, however, as a more liberal Howells, he was enthusiastic over the writings of Tolstoy and was first to recognize properly and promote the latter's literary merit in America.

It is not strange, then, that the man who bespoke of Tolstoy's genius, should also be first to aid the genius of Stephen Crane.

At that time Crane had already privately published Maggie: A Girl of the Streets under the name of Johnston Smith. The venture was thoroughly unsuccessful, he had reached the depths of poverty and despair, was using his paper-bound books to light his fire, where they furnished more good than could be had while they stood in cold, dust-covered yellow stocks against the walls of his room. In rare good luck he was, just then, invited to call upon his friend Hamlin Garland. The older man read his story, and learned of the desperate circumstances in which Crane found himself. Immediately he took steps that were helpful and practical. He fed the boy beefsteak, lent him money, and sent off some of Crane's sketches to O.B. Flower of the Arena. Best of all, he mailed a copy of Maggie to William Dean Howells.

Howells went "sedately mad over Maggie." He did not succeed in efforts to persuade Henry Harper to republish Crane's book, but he did invite Crane to dine with him. After

their meal together, Howells read him some of Emily Dickinson's poems. Without doubt they were unlike anything he had ever heard before. Soon after, it is believed, he wrote the first of his own strange verses. In accordance with his own report, he wrote out one after another of them, almost without stopping or changing a word, as if they lay ready made, waiting in his brain for release.[14]

When they had all been said upon paper they emerged to meet a bewildered public--*The Black Riders*, sixty-eight short poems, terse, unrhymed, out-spokenly bitter. The work does not suggest that of Emily Dickinson, yet there are only three stars in the heavens of modern American poetry which had cast their light and disappeared before the close of the nineteenth century: Walt Whitman, Emily Dickinson, and Stephen Crane.

HAMLIN GARLAND
"THWARTED ROMANTIC"

The Black Riders is dedicated by Crane to Hamlin Garland (1860-1940) the man who had first befriended him. Garland emerged out of the agrarian, middle-western frontier where life was hard and often bitter. After coming to Boston he fell under the influence of William Dean Howells, but unlike the latter westerner he was never accepted into the inner literary circles of the east. He depicted the people of his farming country in *Main Travelled Roads*. The beauties of nature were present in his writing, but over-

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[14] Beer, *op. cit.*, p. 96.

shadowing them were the drab, bleak tones of the lives of the people. Here was realism: the romance of the prairie was not there. Yet Parrington would not name Garland realist, but rather "thwarted romantic;"[15] for as memories of his boyhood softened, so likewise did the tone of his writing. Later in life he saw the magnificence of the Rockies and studied the lore of man's wanderings in the far west where the deadening drudgery of the plains had not yet spread. Then he wrote eagerly of adventure in The Eagle Heart (1900), and in The Captain of the Gray Horse Troop (1902). He differed from the naturalists who were to come after him in that his philosophy was in no sense deterministic. However blackly he might paint the present picture he was full of buoyant optimism: in the far-off future all the conditions of hardship and poverty which he decried would find their alleviation.

MARK TWAIN
"INCORRIGIBLE IDEALIST"

Mark Twain is another nineteenth century writer who, although not wholly a realist, contributed to make our literature more free of old-world ties and affectations that were not native to our soil. Howells declared him to be: "the sole, the incomparable, the Lincoln of our literature... the very marrow of Americanism."[16]

> An incorrigible idealist, as all great humorists must be, he recreated some of the earlier types, translated Colonel Simon Suggs (of Joseph Balwin's Flush Times

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15. Parrington, op. cit., p. 291.

16. As quoted by Parrington, op. cit., p. 87.

> of Alabama and Mississippi) into Colonel Sellers, and Ransey Sniffle (of Gus Longstreet's Georgia Scenes) into Huck Finn. It was a glorious transformation, but the result lacked something of the soiled reality of the earlier blackguards. Yet under his idealism was a generous deposit of the common mud of life. The spirit of Mike Fink[17] was never far from Mark Twain. It haunted him like an evil genius refusing to be exercised by Olivia Clemens (his tyrant wife), and it found vent in the sly literary sprees that begot off-spring to be handed about furtively and chuckled over by the sons of Adam; but for the most part it was kept in strict subjection to the proprieties of Elmira and Hartford.[18]

Samuel Clemens (Mark Twain) began his literary career as a humorist. His earlier books were written in a lighter vein; many had American river life as their background and in this setting he achieved his best work. However, he settled in Hartford, Connecticut, following his marriage to a socially prominent woman. Close contact with the artificialities and hypocrisies of the "Gilded Age" seemed to work harm within him. His native wit transformed into bitter satire. He, of honest mind and chivalrous nature, seemed to see his idealism refuted as one after another of his strongholds were torn from his grasp, until "he came to doubt the adequacy of all strongholds and took refuge in black pessimism--"God is a malignant being, the universe is a machine, and man is a creature of determinism."[19]

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[17] Mike Fink (1770 - 1828) was a keel boatman on the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers. Evidently he was a teller of tall tales about himself. In the years following his death he achieved widespread fame, like Paul Bunyan, as a doer of great deeds. He first appeared in literature in 1829, and since that time is to be found in the writings of a number of well-known authors.

[18] Ibid., p. 92.

[19] Ibid., p. 90.

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COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS

The writings of his later life are worthless as literature. They represent incensed attacks upon the wrongs he found in the world about him. He ended by retiring altogether from the world of realities into the sheltering comfort of dream ideals. Joan of Arc (1896) embodies his dream of the perfect woman.--"And then the outlet through which his idealism had found release slowly closed in, and he was left alone with his comfortless speculations."[20] He writes of his thought:

> In a little while you will be alone in shoreless space, to wander its limitless solitudes without friend or companion forever--for you will remain a thought, the only existent thought, and by your nature inextinguishable, indistructible. But I, your poor servant, have revealed you to yourself and set you free. Dream other dreams and better. Strange, indeed, that you should not have suspected that your universe and its contents were only dreams, visions, fiction! Strange, because they are so frankly and hysterically insane--like all dreams... the silly creations of an imagination that is not conscious of its freaks--in a word that they are a dream, and you the maker of it...[21]

Stephen Crane had read some of the better of Clemens' books that were more or less unspoiled by the taint of later disillusionment. He pronounced rather keen, if somewhat rabid, critical judgment upon them. He is reputed to have said of the satire upon feudal tyranny: "Mark Twain's 'Yankee in King Arthur's Court' (1889) was 'inappropriate as a drunken bride.'"[22] On other occasions he is depicted as giving more

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[20] Ibid., p. 90

[21] Mark Twain, The Mysterious Stranger, and Other Stories, (New York and London: 1922), p. 151.

[22] Beer, op. cit., p. 93.

serious consideration to his remarks.

"I only like one of his books."

Which one? "'Life on the Mississippi'".[23]

Crane was being consistent with his own literary philosophy in stating this preference, for of all Mark Twain's work this piece, (pub. 1883), is perhaps most consistently realistic.

By most critics Huckleberry Finn (1884) is given the highest place. However the latter is admittedly weak in its conclusion. Crane was quick to detect this:

> Elbert Hubbard had persuaded him to read "Huckleberry Finn" and 143 East Twenty Third Street had heard his grunt of disgust over the lame conclusion of Mark Twain's masterpiece. Didn't the genius know any better? A baby could have improved the ending of "Huckleberry Finn". The boys stopped being boys and were dolls. So as in the mind of Arnold Bennett, "Life on the Mississippi" was always Twain's best book.[24]

It is possible that the personalities of Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn influenced Crane when he later depicted Jimmie Trescott and the other very real American children of Whilomville. Certainly they were more of an influence than Mrs. Burnett's "Little Lord Fauntleroy," whom Crane cordially despised.

It is Mark Twain's honest pictures of unaffected American life that are his contributions to gradual, cumulative development and evolution of American realism.

By the early nineties a significant change had taken place. Before this time it would not have been possible for an

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[23] Ibid., p. 105.

[24] Ibid., p. 113.

American to write honestly in the tone of black pessimism which prevailed in Dostoevsky's Crime and Punishment or, for that matter, in the style which had been accepted in European literature for nearly two decades, since the advent of Zola. The change that came was mainly economic and sociological. Growth of business and consequent speculation had caused a series of extremes in prosperity and depression. (The situation is well depicted in Frank Norris' The Pit.) The farmer had little power against the turmoil, he shared least in the wealth, was hardest hit by poverty. (This was the man Hamlin Garland knew so well.) The countryside was fast becoming the drear, deserted land, inhabited only by the hopelessly lethargic, mentally depleted, warped personalities remembered again in a later generation by Sherwood Anderson and his contemporaries.

People were rushing like mice to hide in the dark corners of the cities. Young college men, and some who had not been to college, went there, too, to live in packs together. "Bohemians," they were called. They delved into the slums to watch sickening humanity crowded together in dirty alleys and up dark stairways in tiny airless rooms where they lived twenty together. They talked late into the night at cheap bars over their beer and cigarettes. Thin, hungry-eyed, painted girls like Maggie waited by street-lights along the way home.

All that these boys saw and felt and lived churned within them and came forth in strange, distorted paintings, in harsh, blaring discords that could not be music, and in the

naturalism of Stephen Crane.

In the early nineties three young Americans began to experiment with naturalistic writing. All showed promise of great genius; yet by some strange irony of fate, within four years at the turn of the century all were dead, and their work became virtually lost and forgotten for long drab years that were shorn of brilliance. Only by the twenties was the pace of their work regained by a new generation of men, who, in digging through the past discovered that Harold Frederic, Frank Norris, and Stephen Crane were their brothers. Meanwhile the plodding, ox-like Theodore Dreiser became heir to their work when he published his first novel, Sister Carrie in 1900, the very year that Stephen Crane had died.

HAROLD FREDERIC
FORGOTTEN NATURALIST

The first of these men, Harold Frederic, (1856-1896), had lived longer than the others, yet he began to publish at about the same time. His best and most famous novel, The Damnation of Theron Ware appeared in 1896. (The Red Badge of Courage was published in 1895, and Norris' most typical naturalistic novel, McTeague in 1899.)

Frederic was even more deeply embittered than Garland by the conditions surrounding his boyhood in rural New York State. He sought the city as soon as he was capable of making the change, and never thereafter attempted to defend the cause of the deserted countryside, so great was his hate of it.

His first novel Seth's Brother's Wife (1887), is a

story of flight, like his own, from country to city. It tells of people embittered by family failure and degeneration, and yet pathetically clinging to out-worn vestiges of family pride. There is little kindness in their lives.

He continued to write stories of his native setting. The Damnation of Theron Ware is the story of a young, provincial, Methodist minister who, in his thirst for worldly sophistication isolates himself from a sense of loyalty of any sort; he gossips and looks for sin in all except himself, where it grows rapidly, nourished upon his vanity. Thomas Beer compliments the book highly by designating it "the sole courageous or truthful novel ever written by an American on the subject of religion."[25]

Crane liked this novel by his contemporary in its "shrewd, rough realistic tone,"[26] built upon a background of Methodism which had been so much a part of his own experience. He felt that "it could have been written a darned lot better,"[27] yet it was a good story for all of that.

Crane and Frederic met each other when the former first arrived in England. Immediately they became fast friends for the short time they were to be together. This was unusual. Frederic, despite his shrewd and witty genius had a caustic tongue which he took little care to restrain. He made more enemies than friends. He seemed to nurse an especial, jealous

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[25] Ibid., p. 150.

[26] Loc. cit.

[27] Loc. cit.

grudge against Henry James, availing himself of every opportunity to cause pain or embarrassment to the older man. Yet there was a strange nobility about him. He despised wholeheartedly the practices of Oscar Wilde, but when the broken man was at last exposed he conscientiously defended the facts from exaggeration by his newspaper and his friends as well.

Once Crane read his newly written story, The Monster to his friend. It is about a negro who "had no face." Even to Frederic the idea was so repulsive that he advised Crane to throw it away.

When the Spanish War broke out Crane became restless to be in Cuba. Frederic had suffered a cerebral hemorrhage and was dying, Crane lingered a few days longer in England for his sake, then sailed away. When he once more returned to England his friend had gone.

Even within the explosive twenties the shades of Frederic were not called forth. No reprints were made of his works; no memoirs were issued. American literature texts continued to appear without his mention. Yet a few testify as to his forgotten importance. Parrington regarded his work as a significant link in the transition from the realism of the cheerful commonplace to the deep-rooted pessimisms of a newer generation which was to wrest forth an anthentic naturalism.[28]

Thomas Beer has characterized him vividly within the

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[28] Parrington, op. cit., pp. 288, 327.

shifting scenes of Stephen Crane's biography. He has flung a challenge that would seem a tempting one for some literary adventurer yet to come: "He should be made known to Americans..."

FRANK NORRIS
DISCIPLE OF ZOLA

Of the three earliest American naturalists only one of them, Frank Norris (1870-1902) "wrote consciously with a definite creed. He had thought out a naturalistic philosophy under the inspiration of Zola."[29] He had made a close study of the latter's works; and his own writings McTeague and The Octopus make use of the same basic principles as employed by Zola: "the study of the individual in his reaction to environment, and the study of social forces and their impact upon a group of related individuals."[30] Although he was much more expressly naturalistic of intent than Crane he was not so consistently deterministic in his actual writing as was Crane. Occasionally he allowed a moral purpose to interfere with his objectivity. Like Zola, his novels tend to serve the end of social reform. This is not so true of McTeague and Vandover and the Brute, which are psychological studies, but applies to the novels of the planned trilogy The Epic of the Wheat: The Octopus and The Pit, which were among the first in a long list of American novels based upon economic facts. Norris also wrote some romantic novels that are of no lasting value, perhaps to bring him income while he made his name as a writer.

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[29] Ibid., p. 329.

[30] Loc. cit.

Crane's biographer makes almost no mention of Norris, yet it is probable that the two novelists were acquainted slightly. They were both in Cuba to cover the war, apparently at the same time. Beer does represent Crane as being pleased by the novel McTeague,[31] yet he declared the book to be too moral for his tastes. Possibly Crane sensed Norris' failure to enforce strict adherence to his deterministic philosophy. However, in the work of this man the naturalism of Zola had at last found root in American soil.

SUMMARY

At the time of beginnings in European naturalism America had not yet completed the expansion of her frontiers. There still were fonts from which sprang hope and romance, because America was young and growing. In such an age, lacking in basic pessimisms, it was impossible for naturalism to take root.

However the local colorists, instigated by success of the romantic, Bret Harte, derived a new realism when they endeavored to depict with keen perception the people of their localities. Each small section of the country came to have its champions in literature.

Realism of a more cosmopolitan variety began with the work of Henry James, who drifted from his native America to seek a place in the European culture.

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[31] Beer, op. cit., p. 226.

William Dean Howells was the first American to read widely in the field of European naturalism. He highly endorsed Tolstoy and introduced his work to his contemporaries. Howells, in his own writings made great advance in portraying the realism of the commonplace: middle-class society. His work, today, seems over-moral in restraint, but it did not appear so to his own generation.

Hamlin Garland was first to recognize that all was not happy and good in rural life. He wrote realistically of the drab, hope-defying existence which the farmer had come to bear; yet he was not without the dream that some day was to hold a brighter future.

Mark Twain caught some part of America's epic in Huckleberry Finn and in Life on the Mississippi, yet even he ultimately became enmeshed in the toils of the "Gilded Age" and his genius disintegrated into embitterment.

The first three true naturalists in American letters were born into the age of the cities, when free lands had become exhausted and frontier days were over. There was opportunity to observe human suffering in the crowding of the slums. New social ills were laid bare to view there.

Harold Frederic was driven toward the city by his hatred of the mean existence he found in his rural background. His best known work The Damnation of Theron Ware satirizes the smallness, the prudery, and false pride of the ill-befitted rural clergy.

Frank Norris, disciple of Zola, wrote naturalistic

studies of personality, also economic problem novels that were realistic, yet did not always maintain complete detachment from the motive of reform.

Of the three naturalists Stephen Crane was most objective and consistently deterministic, yet he probably made least conscious effort to follow a school or obey any standards except his own. Like many an original genius he would owe little to the background out of which he sprang.

CHAPTER IV

LITERARY FORMS, SCOPE, AND SOURCES OF THE WORK OF STEPHEN CRANE

The complete writings of Stephen Crane, excepting certain non-literary magazine and newspaper articles and reportings, college themes, and possibly a few other pieces of similarly inconsequential nature,[1] are contained within twelve brief volumes, easily read. However, in view of his short career as a writer, his work is fairly voluminous and

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[1] From the bibliography, *Stephen Crane, A List of His Writings and Articles About Him* compiled by B.J.R. Stolper for the Stephen Crane Association, (Newark, New Jersey: Public Library of Newark, 1930), it has been ascertained that there remain at least the following available writings by Crane which are not contained within *The Work of Stephen Crane* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1925-26). All other writings mentioned or discussed within Chapter IV of this thesis may be found within the latter collection, easily available at Harvard's Weidner Library and elsewhere.

At the Pit Door, Philistine, Vol. XI, p. 97-104, Sept. 1900. Also in Vincent Starrett's *Et Cetera: A Collector's Scrapbook* (Chicago: Covici, 1924), p. 31.

Battle of Bunker Hill, Lippincott's, Vol. LXV, p. 924-932, June 1900.

Battle of Aolferino, Lippincott's, Vol. LXVI, p. 613-624, Oct., 1900.

Campaign Against New Orleans, Lippincott's, Vol. LXV, p. 405-411, March, 1900.

Cry of the Huckleberry Pudding, Syracuse University Chap Book, Vol. II, p. 3-7, May, 1930.

Great Boer Trek, Cosmopolitan, vol. XXIX, p. 153-158, June 1900. Also in Vincent Starrett's *Et Cetera: A Collector's Scrapbook*, (Chicago: Covice, 1924), p. 39.

shows considerable versatility. The man is known almost wholly for The Red Badge of Courage, his poetry, a few isolated stories and sketches and Maggie his tale of "a girl of the streets". However his tales and sketches upon various subjects are innumerable.

It is the intention of this chapter to classify Crane's writings in such a way that the reader may become aware of varieties of topics the man wrote upon and of the forms in which they were written. To discuss literary method and characteristics has not been attempted; those considerations have been reserved

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On the New Jersey Coast. Unsigned article dated from Asbury Park giving the news from that resort with lists of people at hotels. Said to be earliest known writing of Crane. New York Tribune, August 21, 1892.

Sketches and Interviews, Westminster Gazette, May-June, 1897:

Impression of the "Concert"	May 3
Fragment of Valestino	June 3
Fragment of Valestino	June 4
Fragment of Valestino	June 11
Some Interviews	June 14
Some Interviews	June 15
Man in the White Hat	June 18

Storming of Badajos, Lippincott's, Vol. LXV, p. 579-585, April 1900.

Storming of Burkersdorf Heights, Lippincott's, Vol. LXVI, p. 781-794, November, 1900.

Swedes' Campaign in Germany, Lippincott's, Vol. LXVI, p. 299-311; 462-475, August-September, 1900.

Vittoria, Lippincott's, Vol. LXVI, p. 140-150, July 1900.

The articles from Lippincott's were brought together in the collection, Great Battles of the World, (Philadelphia.: Lippincott, 1901), which Vernon Loggins in I Hear America...,(New York: Crowell, 1937), chapter on Stephen Crane, p. 23-31, includes with The Third Violet, Active Service, and The O'Ruddy among Crane's less successful works.

for surveillance in Chapter V. In proceeding about the work of classification it has been decided to deal, first, with each of Crane's longer works, separately. The shorter pieces: tales, sketches, and poetry are to be grouped as to type of subject-matter and discussed accordingly. It has been especially purposed to include a listing of Stephen Crane's entire literary works in this manner.

Crane began his career as a writer with a naturalistic novelette: *Maggie, A Girl of the Streets* (1893), a tale of sordid existence in New York slums. The world that Maggie faced was coldly cruel, devoid of sympathy.

> The naturalism of Crane was apparent in his *Maggie*... in which he never allowed ethical stress to be felt. He stood aloof from the action and described it with all the casualness that isolated episodes might evoke. Crane envisaged man as an animal driven by instinct and victimized by forces indifferent to his fate, his hopes and his designs.[2]

The girl, unable to continue life under such circumstances walks out from the overshadowed blackness of the streets to throw herself into the river of an even deeper "deathly black hue." And then the great irony: only which she is gone is there set up for her great weeping and wailing that she could not evoke her whole life through.

Stephen Crane, himself, had been living in New York for some time before the creation of *Maggie*. He had left college, and was eking out a sparce existence doing a little

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[2] G. Harrison Orians, *A Short History of American Literature, Analyzed by Decades*, (New York: F. S. Crofts and Company, 1940), p. 248.

reporting for the New York Tribune. He knew well the scene that was to be the setting of his story. He had walked in streets where thin, hungry, painted girls were waiting. Yet he was a sensitive youth of tender sympathies, not at all the depraved figure that tradition would build of him. Robert H. Davis, who has written the Introduction to Volume I of Crane's Work, must have truly seen him.

> ...Under the flickering shadows of the arc-lights which at that time illuminated Broadway I got for the first time a blinding flash of the romantic Crane. A lock of soft hair lay upon his high, white and shapely forehead. There was a fullness about the temples and over the eyes; the modelling exquisite. Crowning the cheek bones was a tone of light coral accentuated against the sallow dominant tone. It may have been because of the high light reflections but there seemed to be a tawny note in his hair, which was soft and long and in disarray. Around his mouth hovered an elusive smile, while the whole posture of the body suggested the dancing master about to begin a minuet.
>
> ...I discerned an almost luminous beauty in the eyes of this modern Villon. They were large, the iris seemingly out of proportion to the pupil, blue in general tone, brilliant, flashing.
>
> All else was sombre, dull, chilled. I can see the small hand pressed against his coat, a net work of blue veins, the thin index and middle fingers and the ball of his thumb stained with nicotine. But from his forehead and those eyes quivered an aurora.[3]

Davis also writes that later on the same night of their first meeting he and Crane were walking together, absorbed in conversation, through the chill streets. They were accosted along the way by a girl street walker. Crane told

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[3] Robert H. Davis, Introduction, The Work of Stephen Crane, Vol. I, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1925-26).

his friend to wait and he stepped aside to speak with her. He bid her go home where she belonged, then gave her money and sent her on her way. He was more than generous always, in his regard for unfortunate brother-humans.

Thomas Beer speculates upon the writing of Maggie: "Perhaps it was simple recoil from the lukewarm current of letters, or perhaps it was a deeper curiosity that took Stephen Crane headlong and resolute into the slums."[4] It would seem that Maggie appeared to him a dramatic figure with whom he was in full human sympathy. Yet he saw the world and fate unyielding, stone-like things. Though his heart might be sore for her plight he was true to his artistic conviction: it could not have been otherwise. Surely he did not write his book to shock people, to appear blase and worldly wise!

But let the author speak for himself:

> "I had no other purpose in writing Maggie," Crane declared in November 1896, "than to show people to people as they seem to me. If that be evil, make the most of it." This was nearly five years after he wrote the book, and he had of course had time to find a later critical reason for an earlier creative act. But in September 1891, after his first summer in New York and his first studies in the poverty and misery of the Bowery, his purpose was already clear. The Bowery, he then told a friend, was the most interesting part of the city, though nobody had written honestly about it. He meant soon to write an honest Bowery book.[5]

Yet Maggie was ill-received at first, mainly because it violated the Victorian sense of decency. But in the test of

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[4] Thomas Beer, Stephen Crane, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1923), p. 77.

[5] Carl Van Doren, editor: Stephen Crane, Twenty Stories (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1940) Notes, p. 501.

time it has found a place among the best and most significant of Crane's writings. It is one of the principal works for reference in establishing its author's place as a naturalistic writer, and shall be dealt with in that respect at a later point in this thesis.

George's Mother (1896), another novelette, has for its setting the same Bowery that was background for Maggie. It is another highly effective story, full of pathos, in dramatic contrast to the extreme cruelty of an unfeeling fate upon which tortured human emotions are tossed. It tells of unrelenting mother-love and an evil, calloused son. Yet in a broader sense it is the story of the bond that all mothers hold for their children, and of the pain in its severing. This writer would commend George's Mother as some of Crane's very best work, yet it is little known or read today.

The Red Badge of Courage (1896) is the novel that brought recognition to Stephen Crane. There is little dissent among critics in the opinion that here, at least, is a remarkable book.

It was written by a youth who had had little experience, either of his own, or through the channels of literature, upon which to lean. Yet from the stories which had been told him by soldiers in his boyhood, from the projection of himself, by imagination, into battle he was able to experience and live the fears of his hero, Henry Fleming. The young soldier didn't want to go to war, he was afraid, and ran from the battle. Later, through some mistake of fate he was counted a hero, and

accepted his place, scorning the cowardly ones. But deep in his heart Henry Fleming knew that many men are afraid when they are driven forth to kill and to be killed, but they cannot run away from war; it swallows them up, even as he was swallowed up by it.

Crane seemed to do wonderfully well in the handling of a single subject, thought, or picture. He could not be diverted from his course but told the incident in simple, clear, logical order, vividly and well. So it is with *The Red Badge of Courage,* an epic on fear and heroism.

Crane had planned for some time to write a Civil War story. He searched old magazines and borrowed the *Century's* Battles and Leaders "from his friend Mrs. Armstrong, yet he cast out these, finally, to rely upon his own imagination because they did not contain the type of material he wanted. It little mattered about the setting, anyway. The type of Crane's genius transcends time in the years of history books. *The Red Badge of Courage* might have been written of any war: it is the story of human emotion.

There is a short story, a sort of companion piece and sequel to *The Red Badge of Courage,* called *The Veteran.* In it Henry Fleming has become an old man. His barn catches fire, and in rushing inside to save the horses, his own life is sacrificed. He gives it courageously and well, thus bringing his days to a close as he would have wished to live them, flinging forth the "red badge of courage." It is a well-done, little-known work, which does not seem to fall into the classifications fixed for

Crane's other shorter works.

In dealing with actual experience of people in contemporary surroundings Crane did not fare so well. He attempted to write a romantic novel, Active Service (1899) in the setting of the war with Turkey, which he had attended as a correspondent, in Greece. As a whole the book is unsuccessful, but there are excellent descriptive passages scattered throughout in Crane's characteristic style. Carl Van Doran in his justifiably unfavorable critical introduction to Active Service allows that "the book glitters with impressionistic phrases, "however:

> Neither the general scheme of Active Service nor the persons in it would make it worth reading after a quarter century. Its value lies in its incidental details .... If the plot has about it certain touches of convention, so has Crane's conception of his characters .... Crane was no master when it came to representing women in his stories. ... Crane's mind is his greatest charm.[6]

Crane has shown no indication in any of his writings that he had the ability to handle complex plot forms of the conventional nature, especially those involving the appearance of that product of civilization; the feminine coquette. He could sense the deep, fundamental emotions that were basic in human life. He proved himself a worthy artist in his handling of them. It was the more sophisticated plot, demanded by a proprietous public that he could not properly supply. George's Mother and Maggie were close enough to the primitive in their

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[6] Carl Van Doren, Introduction, The Work of Stephen Crane, Vol. IV.

reactions so that they did not confuse him. The noble young ladies of proper society were subjects of confusion, if not of terror and of mystery to him.

The portions of Active Service dealing with the war itself are handled much better than is the heavy burden (for Crane) of the social intercourse of the fifteen, or more, characters portrayed.

The Third Violet is another, hardly successful, romantic novel having its setting partly in New York City, partly in a country resort "up-state." It is valuable, mainly, because it is somewhat autobiographical.

> ... the poor and weaker story becomes the more arresting betrayal of Crane the man, as distinguished from Crane the artist; whereas the tale which is sufficient in itself betrays its personal author but meagerly, and that only in small lapses and excrescences ... And the point about Crane which criticism deduces from the comparison is that: that the story which is impersonal is a thing of power.
>
> He was at bottom so little of a realist that it remained to the end impossible for him to make any significant beautiful, or even graceful use of his own experiences until he had gone so far away from them that they might as well have been anybody's experiences. The intrusion of his own emotions is always recognizable, sharp, conspicuous on the pages (for Crane, if he sometimes wrote badly, could not write indistinctly) and it is always a false touch.[7]

In The Third Violet Crane has apparently done a strange thing. He has characterized not one, but two men to represent two autobiographical phases of himself: one, Hawker,

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7. Wilson Follett, Introduction, The Work of Stephen Crane, Vol. III, p. Xi-xii.

the artist, representing the hurt felt by the adolescent Crane in unrequited love, the other, Hollanden, the writer, expressing contempt for such sentimentality.

> It is Hawker who, in the story undergoes the counterpart of Crane's own experience. Just as clearly it is Hollanden who expresses what Crane wished to make the reader construe as the author's opinion of the experience. Crane picked himself apart into two personalities. One, called Hawker, exists to be spitted on the hatpin of a romantic infatuation and held up wriggling; the other called Hollenden, is there to make sure that we miss none of the poor fellow's writhings. Hawker is Crane filled with self-admiring self-pity; Hollanden is Crane laughing at himself without admitting that it _is_ himself, and inviting the reader to laugh, too. The perversity of the disguise includes making a painter of the character who was actually nearest to himself and a journalist of the one who was not so near. It also includes as the most forlorn part of the makeshift, a forced happy ending.[8]

It is as if Crane were wary to admit his own feelings or recognize them. He chooses more to associate himself with the writer who is aloof and self-sufficient.

The story, as Wilson Follett suggests, is too personal, too complex in the involved emotional overtones of the author to be well done. The most fully characterized figure in the story is the artist's dog "Stanley" who is in reality the setter belonging to Crane's brother. As usual Crane shows keen sympathy and insight regarding the dog.

The last of Crane's major works, _The O'Ruddy_ was still in process of being written when he died. It was to be a sort of picaresque novel about an Irishman from the country seeking

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[8] _Loc_. _cit_., p. xix.

his fortune in the England of several hundred years ago. It was completed posthumously by the author's friend Robert Barr, who tried to carry out the work as Crane might have done it. It is difficult to determine how much of the present book may be attributed to its first author. There seem to be signs of Crane's characteristic style in not more than the first third of the writing. The whole is quite unlike any previous work he had done, therefore can contribute little of a reliable nature to a study of his work.

SOCIAL PROBLEM TALES AND SKETCHES

Some of Crane's finest shorter works are sketches which, like *Maggie* and *George's Mother*, have the New York Bowery as their background. They are all exceedingly brief in length and are contained, with other selections in Volume XI of *The Work of Stephen Crane*. With two exceptions,[9] they are grouped together under the section heading: *Midnight Sketches*.

An Experiment in "Misery" (1898) is perhaps the most noteworthy of the collection. It is the experience of a young man,--it could have been Crane's actual experience, but is not necessarily that,--who ventures into the haunts of social derelicts to live and sleep with them for a day. Crane, in writing of his purpose in the sketch, said, "I tried to make plain that the root of Bowery life is a sort of cowardice. Perhaps I mean a lack of ambition, or to willingly be knocked flat and accept the licking."

The Men in the Storm (1896) is a vivid, dynamic

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[9] *A Street Scene in New York* and *A Self-Made Man* are to be found under another heading: *Minor Conflicts*.

picture hardly more than that of lines of cold and hungry men waiting hours beneath lashing, blinding snow for the doors of a mission to open, which would mean shelter and warmth and food for only a few of them.

The Duel That Was Not Fought is a cafe story in lighter vein of drinking men who attempt to stir up trouble between a hot-blooded little Cuban duellist and one of their own number who possessed more brawn than good sense.

In The Pace of Youth the beautiful daughter of the proprietor of a "merry-go-round" elopes with the young man who gives out the rings, under the insensed father's very nose. It is written with a light whimsical touch.

The Auction is an ironical bit of writing. A couple, having been turned from their home, and having lost all their goods at auction, are socially disgraced in a final indignation too much to bear: their parrot gives off rousing sailor songs and talk upon the auction block to make his former owners the source of public ridicule; and ruination descends upon their heads.

A Detail (1896) is a mere vignette of a fragile little old lady, innocent and trusting, who arouses tender sympathies in her search for something to do: plain sewing, perhaps; she really needs the work--if she could only find someone who would let her try.

An Eloquence of Grief is the heart-rending picture of a friendless, panic-stricken servant girl in court, accused of stealing.

A Desertion (1900) returns somewhat to the mood of Maggie and George's Mother. A girl returns to the lonely flat she shares with her father. She finds her parent silent, unresponsive. She alternately scolds and cajoles him until at last she suspects something amiss. Horror descends upon her when she discovers that he is dead, and she runs from the place shrieking. The neighbors gossip that her "old man" has turned her out into the streets at last, where they would have her belong. It is a real and tragic picture.

An Onimous Baby (1896): The toddling poor-child wanders into the rich-child's territory, steals his toy because it is bright and attractive, and because he wants it. The urchin retreats with his booty, leaving his victim howling. This story, though in a different setting, has much in common with Crane's Whilomvidle Stories.

A Great Mistake (1896) records a mere baby's first experience in stealing a lemon from the fruit vendor, in which act he was caught and terrorized.

A Dark Brown Dog is an upsetting, unpleasant story in which Crane seems to go too far, as he very seldom does, in the detail of his naturalism. The cruelty shown herein is too extreme. A child's drunken father in a fit of rage throws from the window the small dog-waif his son has befriended. The pathetic and lovable animal is dashed to death upon the lower roof-tops. Crane loved animals so well himself that this could not have been other than extreme tragedy to him. Being tragedy, perhaps, may suffice in the naming of brutal slaughter, art.

A Street Scene in New York records descriptively, artistically, the collapse of an unidentified man, and the gathering of the crowd in a scene often recurrent in life wherever there are cities.

A Self Made Man is one of the less forceful of Crane's stories. It concerns a youth who befriends an old man, and in helping him comes to share considerable property which the old man had been powerless to claim, previously. It is too conventional a story of success found by the youth gone out to seek his fortune.

WAR TALES AND SKETCHES

The sale of *The Red Badge of Courage* (1894), to be serialized for newspapers, in itself could have been sufficient reason for Crane's return, time and again, to war as a subject for his shorter writings. He was convinced, however, during his last years that *The Red Badge of Courage* had been too long. He did not attempt, therefore, another such work. He wrote instead, several shorter stories about the Civil War, listed in Volume II, *Tales of Two Wars,* in Crane's *Work* under the section heading *1861*. These few might have been followed by others had he not then been commissioned (1894) by a syndicate to travel through the Far West and Mexico in search of story material. It was from experience on this latter trip that he wrote many of the short stories included in this thesis under the heading "Tales of Local Color and Adventure."

Late in 1896 he was sent out again, this time aboard

a tramp steamer loaded with guns and ammunition, to report upon filibustering activities in Cuba. The steamer sank off Jacksonville, Florida. Crane was lucky to escape with his life. Later the story of his adventure, vividly, magnificently recorded was to become The Open Boat.

Within a few months (1879) he had reached Greece, via England to serve as correspondent in the war with Turkey. This trip netted one powerfully done, stirring sketch, Death and the Child, (in addition to his Active Service, which adds little to his reputation).

A deserted peasant child playing on his father's lands ~~is~~ is too young to understand the progress of the battle which he sees played, as if by pigmy figures, far away below his feet. Crane has used the two symbols "death" and "the child" in dramatic contrast to one another. The piece is highly effective, especially in its concluding paragraphs. It is suggestive of that other story, Chickamauga, by Ambrose Bierce in which a baby playing at war leads an army of wounded, creeping men through the woods, laughing often at their grotesqueness as they writhe and die behind him. Perhaps Crane had read the latter work.

In 1898 Crane saw real war in Cuba, and suffered fever and exhaustion there which were to take heavy toll upon his life. Yet it is from backgrounds of this time that the great bulk of his war stories were written. Few attain the quality of early work, however, for he struggled to overcome weariness in the writing of them that he might earn needed money to maintain the

pace of the brief, crowded life that was left for him.

THE CIVIL WAR: "1861"

The Little Regiment (1896) is one of the very best of Crane's war stories. It concerns the love of two brothers, Dan and Billie. They could not show affection to each other, but were cold and even cruel. Yet the deep bond between them is brought out in the anxiety of each for the other's safety, displayed only in the presence of strangers, never revealed to the loved one himself.

Three Miraculous Soldiers (1896): A young rebel girl is an accessory in the hiding of three Confederate soldiers in her barn. The captain of the men's regiment is brought there as prisoner by Union men and left in the charge of one sentry. The guard is overpowered and the men escape. Returning Union soldiers are amazed at the concern of the rebel girl over the unconscious form of the sentry, her enemy.

The story is extremely melodramatic and difficult to follow. It is not the type of work Crane excelled in.

A Mystery of Heroism (1894): A soldier foolishly risks his very life to fetch a bucket of drinking water through the midst of battle for his thirsty comrades. Then, when he has safely survived the perils of the trip the whole pail full is spilled in "horse-play" before anyone of them is able to taste a single drop. The story ends effectively with the touch of irony that Crane was so well able to give.

> The two genial, skylarking young lieutenants were the first to gain possession of it. They played over it in their fashion.
>
> When one tried to drink, the other teasingly knocked his elbow. "Don't Billie! You'll make me spill it," said the one. The other laughed.
>
> Suddenly there was an oath, the thud of wood on the ground, and a swift murmur of astonishment among the ranks. The two lieutenants glared at each other. The bucket lay on the ground, empty.[10]

An Indiana Campaign is written with a light and humorous touch. The entire population of a frontier town is given a scare when it is rumored that a rebel is hiding in the woods. It turns out to be the town reprobate who had gone on a spree.

A Grey Sleeve (1896) is a conventional type of romantic Civil War story in which a rebel girl meets a chivalrous northern captain. There is nothing remarkable about the style nor the story it tells; it is typical of many by other authors of the day.

THE SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR: "1898."

The Clan of No-Name (1898): A girl loves a Cuban soldier whose language she cannot even speak. She dreads the marriage that her family urges her to make among her own kind. Only when her photograph is returned, with the meaning that her lover is dead does she go about her mother's bidding dutifully.

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[10] Stephen Crane, Twenty Stories, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1940), A Mystery of Heroism, p. 108.

Virtue in War is a rambling ineffective piece of work which adheres too closely to factual detail of eye-witnessed incidents from the Spanish-American War.

His Majestic Lie: An American spy in Havana is outrageously overcharged for food in a restaurant. When the tide has turned and the city is in American hands he returns to collect his due "on the house."

The Second Generation registers the disgust of a politician for his spoild son who wants to quit the army, after having been a failure and a quitter at many other things. He dismisses his son with the words: "I guess you are just no damn good!"

The Price of the Harness (1898) is a not too vivid but graphic sketch of war in Cuba, probably from actual experience. It does not have the single-pointedness that heads up Crane's better works into more perfect art-forms. This example is proof of the fact that Crane did not often profitably use his own experiences in writing. His imagination could have been more effective. Approximately the same judhment might be applied to the other writings in the Cuban group of sketches. They are hardly worth the time it consumes to deal with them critically in comparison with the really worthy work Crane has sometimes produced.

The Lone Charge of William P. Perkins: A soldier survives the thick of battle by taking refuge inside an old boiler which happens to be there.

God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen: A newspaper correspondent goes through great dangers of war only to find, when he at last emerges safely with his skin, that his paper has sent a wire reprimanding him for his "inaction."

The Revenge of the Adolphus is the story of a naval engagement off Cuba. The style is too close to reporting. It does not make good literature.

The Sergeant's Private Madhouse is a short piece about the difficulties of being a sergeant. It is intended to be humorous, but is ineffective in story interest.

Marines Signalling Under Fire at Guantanamo: A sketch intended to commend the bravery of the United States Marines.

War Memories: A series of general impressions not attempting to be fiction.

There is one exception to the general inferior quality of Crane's Cuban works: An Episode of War (1902). Of all the writing turned out by Crane as a result of his Cuban experience little counts for much save this one piece, said to have been written of the Spanish-American war, yet which could just as well have been of 1861 backgrounds. No where within it is identity of place of action made known. It is a superb, intense bit of writing in which all nature seems to reflect the mood of the man, yet it is told with great reserve and dignity. Crane, it would seem has here identified himself, once more, not with reporting, but with art.

Besides his selections on actual wars Crane wrote a series of four short episodes concerning the imaginary army of Spitzbergen against Rostina, The Kicking Twelfth: Four Regimental Episodes: I "Kimup, the Kickers," II And if he wills, we must die,"[11] III The Shrapnel of their Friends, and IV The Upturned Face. Of these the last only is notable. It contains the rather gruesome details of a burial party at work. The men dread the last horrible duty: that of placing the shovel-full of dirty which is to cover the face of the corpse.

TALES OF LOCAL COLOR AND ADVENTURE

Crane collected material for a different type of story while on his sojourn in the Far West and into Mexico (1894-5). These new stories were peopled with "bad men," gamblers, and shady characters, and possessed the characteristic tang of the West. They seem to the conservative eastern mind, at least, more romantic, on the whole than his Bowery tales and the better of his war sketches.

Crane saw the setting for his short story The Blue Hotel when he was in Nebraska, February, 1895. Somewhere there was a "blue hotel" of an arrestingly ugly hue. He remembered it and built his story about the building which had struck his fancy.

H. L. Menken has pronounced The Blue Hotel his favorite Crane story. A Swede walks into the hotel looking

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[11] The same story is called The End of Battle in the Modern Library collection: Maggie: A Girl of the Streets and Other Stories, New York, 1933.

for trouble. He suspects the peaceable town of being the wild west he has read about. Out of his very fears and mistrust he creates the dangers he was guarding against. In one evening's card game a climax of turmoil is reached. The men of the hotel tolerate the nuisance of him with difficulty until a gambler intervenes and does away with him forever in short order, and "gets three years" for his trouble. After it is all over a cowboy in the story wonders:

> "It's funny, aint it? If he hadn't said Johnnie was cheatin' he'd be alive this minute. He was an awful fool. Game played for fun, too. Not for money. I believe he was crazy.
>
> "I feel sorry for that gambler," said the Easterner.
>
> "Oh so do I," said the cowboy. "He don't deserve none of it for killin' who he did."
>
> The Swede might not have been killed if everything had been square.
>
> "Might not have been killed?" exclaimed the cowboy. "Everything square? Why when he said that Johnnie was cheatin' and acted like such a jackass? And then in the saloon he fairly walked up to git hurt?"...
>
> "You're a fool!" cried the Easterner, viciously.
>
> "You're a bigger jackass than the Swede by a million majority. ... Listen! Johnnie was cheating!"... "I saw him. And I refused to stand up and be a man. I let the Swede fight it out alone. And you--you were simply puffing around the place and wanting to fight. And then old Scully himself. We are all in it! This poor gambler isn't even a noun. He is a kind of adverb. Every sin is the result of a collaboration. We, five of us, have collaborated in the murder of this Swede. Usually there are from a dozen to forty women involved in every murder, but in this case it seems to be only five men--you, I, Johnnie, old Scully; and that fool of an unfortunate gambler came merely as a culmination, the apex of a human movement, and gets all the punishment." The cowboy, injured and rebellious, cried out blindly into the fog

of mysterious theory: "Well, I didn't do anythin? did I?"[12]

The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky is Willa Cather's preferred story in the western group. The setting is Texas. John Potter, town marshal, brings home a bride. Instead of the usual welcoming committee, they find upon their arrival one lone man, Scratchy Wilson, reprobate, on a drunken rampage. Such is his reputation that everyone locks their doors against him. The streets are deserted. Scratchy is the problem to be met, and Potter faces him without guns, but with a cool head and conquers the field. When the villain gets it through his befuddled head that Potter is married there is no more to be said: "He picked up his starboard revolvers, and placing both weapons in their holsters went away. His feet made funnel-shaped tracks in the heavy sand."[13]

Horses--One Dash (1896) has been discussed somewhat in a previous chapter of this thesis. This incident is quite accurately based upon an actual narrow-escape from bandits, experienced by Crane while in Mexico. It is vividly related.

Five White Mice (1898) is a melodramatic, yet at the same time realistic story of drinking, dice-throwing, and mainly a near-death encounter of a young inebriated American with murderous Mexicans in a dark street.

A Poker Game: A very short episode in which there are simultaneously several remarkable poker hands.

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12. Stephen Crane, Twenty Stories, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1940), The Blue Hotel, p. 430-431.

13. Ibid, The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky, p. 393.

A Man And--Some Others: A stranger, presumably Crane, comes upon a lone sheep herder in the wilderness who is battling for his lands against some outlaw Mexicans. The youth kills a man, while his host dies a hero's death in the fight.

Twelve O'Clock is an ironical tale in which an argument over the bird in a clock is cause for the death of two men. While the two corpses lie piled on the floor: "There was a curious grim silence, and then suddenly, in the death chamber, there sounded the loud whirring of the clock's works; little doors flew open, a tiny wooden bird appeared and cried 'Cuckoo'--twelve times."

Moonlight on the Snow: A rather good story of an outlaw town--somewhat in the manner of Bret Harte--which has reformed. Soon after the resolution for enforcement of law and order a murder is committed by one of the community's "best citizens." His former cronies can't bear to hang him; they are faced with an embarrassing situation regarding the matter.

The Wise Men: The "New York Kid" and the "San Francisco Kid" sponser a foot race in Mexico City and "get out" nearly the entire populace to lay bets on the two contestants. Their favorite bartender, Pop, wins the race and money for them running in his underwear and stocking feet.

Ol' Bennet and the Indians is a different type of western story, based upon historical fact, possibly upon the account of the Bennets given in Lossing's Pictorial Field Book of the Revolution (1850), Chapter XVI. The scene is Wyoming in

1788. "Ol' Bennet," a shrewd frontiersman, made prisoner by the Indians kills his captors and escapes.

One of Crane's best-written works is the Open Boat, a product of his experience on another journalistic expedition. He (the correspondent) and three other men were adrift for fifty hours in a small boat. When land was in sight a wave broke the back of one of them, he did not live to feel the earth again. In this piece of writing is all of Crane's power, a minimum of his weaknesses. He comes closer here to the expression of a philosophy than in most of his other works, which do more often than not evidence a coal suspicion of the world, because of which he holds back against expressing only possible glummer of hope for man.

Flanigan and His Short Filibustering Adventure takes place in the same locality as does The Open Boat. However it is more to be classed with the Cuban group of writings. It does not possess the intensity of The Open Boat, nor the simplicity of its telling.

STORIES OF HUMOR AND IRONY

These might easily have been classed indiscriminately with the foregoing ones. Crane was nearly always ironical in his touch, and humor was not uncommon with him, although it was not his genius that it should be so. Almost without exception, in his masterpieces, there is notorious lack of humor.

The following selections seem set apart by being extreme in these properties--that is, in them humor and irony

are the predominant features, sometimes to the extent of seeming forced.

The Reluctant Voyagers is the story of two brothers who drift to sea on a raft and have to be picked up by a steamer. They are embarrassed by the necessity of being left off in New York clad in only their swimming suits. Munson would criticize Crane's tone in this story:

> Crane tried to be humorous in The Reluctant Voyagers, but he had no light touch. The sparceness of diction, the brief rhythm, the heavy tone causes one to expect something tense, as in The Open Boat: yet what follows is obviously meant to be diverting. The Reluctant Voyagers seems bad in every respect, yet it is bad only in tone.[13]

Sullivan County Sketches recount three amusing anecdotes about camping out, possibly suggested by Crane's boyhood experiences in the Adirondacks. The first, A Tent In Agony, is about the appearance of a bear in the middle of the night. In Four Men in A Cave the hikers discover a strange hermit who is a "shark at cards," living in a chamber of an underground labrynth. Mesmeric Mountain is by far the most artistic of the series. A man lost in the woods tries to find his way back, judging from a mountain, but remains baffled until he climbs to the top, and there, far below, as plain as can be, lies the camp for which he has been searching. The principle criticism of the first two of these sketches might be that they seem exaggerated in their telling for humorous effect in a manner which tends to be over-done.

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[13] Gorham B. Munson, Style and Form in American Prose (New York: Doubleday, Doran, 1929), Prose for Fiction: Stephen Crane, p. 159-170.

The Silver Pageant is a puzzling bit of irony. A strange artist had silver "pictures in his eyes." All expected great and wonderful things to be painted by him, yet when the time came for him to reveal his secret he was found dead. Crane appears to have resorted to a form of symbolism in this story for the expression of a point of view. However it is difficult to sense this meaning in the strangely told story.

In *Three* Fables Crane has brought his characteristic style to fables which in their stories seem more or less traditional, although the writer of this thesis knows of nothing to lay claim that they were based upon any other sources save their author's imagination. Irony is strong in all of them. *How the Donkey Lifted the Hills* explains that the donkey became the slave of man through his foolish boastfulness. In *The Victory of the Moon* a man fights the moon for his stolen wife, only to find that the wife no longer wants him. The moon's weakness is proved as strong as his strength in the matter. The little men of the fable *The Voice of the Mountains* trick an enslaved giant and steal his lands when he trusts their promise to build wings for him.

The Squire's Madness: A woman goes to great length to prove her husband is mad. The latter submits to her idea and goes with her to be examined by a psychiatrist. The doctor takes the husband aside following the consultation and confides that, not he, but the wife is stark mad!

A Prologue is so short, yet so puzzling a morsel,

that it is submitted here for complete surveiance by the reader. There is nothing else, even amongst Crane's poetry, that is quite comparable, nor is there any light of explanation upon it that the writer of this thesis has been able to find.

A Prologue

> A gloomy stage. Slender curtains at a window, centre. Before the window, a table, and upon the table a large book, opened. A moonbeam, no wider than a sword-blade, pierces the curtains and falls upon the book.
>
> A moment of silence.
>
> From without, then--an adjacent room in intention--comes sounds of celebration, of riotous drinking and laughter. Finally a swift quarrel. The din and crash of fight. A little stillness. Then a woman's scream:
>
> "Ah, my son, my son."
>
> A moment of silence.
>
> Curtain.[12]

STORIES OF HORROR
OR GRUESOME EFFECT

Crane's very few horror stories have gained for him a reputation with many people which is out of all proportion to the number he wrote. They do not seem to be a natural form of writing to him, but rather a technique that he cultivated with great effectiveness on several instances. The influences of both Poe and Bierce seem to be felt in his writings of this type.

The Monster (1897) cannot properly be named a tale of horror, but rather "one of the most heartbreaking pieces of

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14. Crane, Stephen, The Work of Stephen Crane (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1925-26), Vol. XI, p. 313.

irony ever written, full of ... Crane's grim flippancy."[15] Yet the effect achieved is gruesome. It was turned down by the Century Magazine because of the effect the editors feared it might have upon expectant mothers. The hardened Harold Frederic, too, had advised Crane to throw the story away. Yet *The Monster* is greater than a mere impression of a man with "no face." It is the only one of Crane's writings to deal with the feelings and emotions of an entire community of people. Growing gossip and fear turn all livelihood away from the door of a physician who spared the wretched life of his faithful negro servant, who had been mutilated horribly by fire while rescuing the doctor's own child. It is one of the longest of Crane's short-stories.

An Illusion in Red and White is the tale of a man who has murdered his wife. By gradual infiltration of suggestion he makes his children "remember" that their mother was stolen away by a man with bright red hair and large white hands. Even after their father confesses and is convicted of the crime they still insist and believe in his innocence--so well has he placed a substitute image in their minds.

Manacled is a heart-rending, terrifically vivid story of an actor, hobbled securely for a play, trapped in a burning theater. Every detail of his death-agonies is brought home to the reader. It is a striking, but upsetting, piece of work which for the most part has remained forgotten though it deserves a place among Crane's best work.

15: Kunitz and Haycraft, *American Authors 1600-1880*, A Biographical Dictionary, (New York: Wilson Company, 1938).

A Tale of Mere Chance: Guilt like that suffered by Lady Macbeth is the theme of this story. Blood stains on white tiles seem to short of murder to the guilty one until his whole environment is made torture with screams of, "Murder! Murder!"

The Snake records in detail the encounter of a man with a poisonous snake. The man kills the snake, aided by his dog. The selection is more anecdote than full-fledged story.

WHILOMVILLE STORIES

Stephen Crane was one in the line between Samual Clemens and Booth Tarkington in his writing of the Whilomville Stories. They are stories of incidents in the life of a small boy, Jimmie Trescott, who is younger, therefore more restrained in his activities than Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn, yet far more real in every sense than the children of the Sunday school prank variety as put forth by Tarkington. His own boyhood home, Port Jervis, New York serves as setting under the name of Whilomville. Crane was among the very first to bring realism into the field of children's stories. However, so well written are these stories that they are fit for enjoyment by readers of all ages.

The Angel Child: Jimmie Trescott's girl-cousin visits him and induces all the children of the neighborhood to have their curls cut off to the horror of their fond mothers and the secret satisfaction of the fathers.

Lynx Hunting: Jimmie and a friend go lynx hunting and hit old Henry Fleming's cow by mistake, for which they narrowly miss a thrashing.

The Lover and the Tell Tale: Jimmie has to fight when he is teased about his girl by the other children. The teacher keeps him after school for fighting.

Showin' Off: A show-off really does ride down the steep hill, he had boasted about and threatened to encounter, in a terrible mistake resulting in a smashed velocipede.

Making an Oration: Jimmie suffers agonies on his day to speak a piece at school.

Shame: Jimmie is socially ostracized by the other children because he brings his lunch to the picnic in a pail.

The Carriage Lamps: Jimmie is confined to his room for breaking the carriage lamps. Hold-Up Harry, the Red Captain, and the Terror of the Sierras attempt his rescue.

The Knife: Two negroes go to steal watermelons, each secretly, and catch each other, so that neither dares reveal the other's guilt.

The Stove: Jimmie and his cousin cook turnips in the furnace and smell up the house on the day of Mrs. Trescott's party.

The Trial Execution, and Burial of Homer Phelps: Jimmie's friends "play Indian." Homer is declared dead, but objects vehemently to his burial.

The Fight: Jimmie is "licked" by the new boy in town.

The City Urchin and the Chaste Villagers: A bully is subdued by a supreme power: his mother, who breaks up a fight in which he is participating.

A Little Pilgrimage: Jimmie changes Sunday schools that he may attend a better Christmas party, only to be greeted by the announcement: "this year there will be no Christmas tree...."

His New Mittens: Horace loses his new mittens and is so frightened of the expected consequences that he starts to run away from home. He finds that mittens are not the most important factor in the minds of his family after all.

POETRY

An entire thesis might well be written upon the poetry of Stephen Crane, alone. That phase of his work is most individual and presents in its form a strange prediction of twentieth-century things to come.

It is traditional, now, to assume that Crane's poetic career was begun by Howells reading to him from the work of Emily Dickinson. However there is little concrete evidence that may be referred to for any claim that Crane's poetry is influenced substantially by Emily Dickinson's. His form is free (cadence) verse. The lines are short, abrupt; the effect staccato.

Loggins says: "All of Cranes writing is subjective, but the poems purport to be nothing else and so furnish the best key to his remarkable mind."[16] It would seem true that if one

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[16] Vernon Loggins, I Hear America . . . (New York: Crowell 1937), Stephen Crane, p. 23-31.

is to study Crane's philosophy it must be, for great part, through his poetry. He published two small volumes, one early, the other very late in his literary career.

The first, The Black Riders and Other Lines (1895) reveals him in full vigor. He lashes forth philosophically with bold doubts at the universe. He finds, yet, something very sacred, tender, and possessing of dignity in man and woman that shall be last in a crumbling world. He appears to pity man's plight because the gods and the universe have mocked him in tones of hollow emptiness.

War is Kind and Other Lines (1900) shows a changed Crane. His impressionistic style and vivid idioms are still a part of his writing. But the old vigor and force of conviction are lacking. The embittered tone has mellowed until it becomes, in places, a far less pleasing sentimentality. It is strange that here he seems to have written valueless love poems that he passed over as an adolescent. The title poem of the volume, War is Kind, however, is a worthy exception to the criticisms set forth, as are several other scattered poems. Here he has matured and mellowed, yet has not softened too greatly. The flow of words is smoother, handled with more skill than in earlier work.

SUMMARY

The sources for the writings of Stephen Crane are to small extent found in the influence of his reading experience in literature. His style is unique with himself; he is an original genius: a precursor of the twentieth century. He wrote best when at leisure--at a distance from personal involvement in experience; when he was cooly impersonal he reached a high form of art. When he allowed himself to enter into the story, as in The Third Violet the resulting product was inclined to be lacking in forcefulness, weak and unintegrated in structure. He descended, in his more careless attempts either to poow reporting or sentimentality.

Therefore the best source for Crane's writing appears to be his own imagination. He handled well situations into which it was possible to project himself, yet which he had not experienced in reality.

In recording actuality he tended to include too much detail, and to not view the situation artistically. However, even his best work had to have some tie with fact, either through hear-say and historical records (as in The Red Badge of Courage), or through a familiar locality and type of character as in Maggie).

Crane used several localities in which he had lived or visited as backgrounds for his writings: village life in New York State; New York City Bowery; the "west", "far-west" and Mexico; 1895: war with the Turks in Greece; and 1898: Spanish-American War in Cuba.

His major works are *Maggie, A Girl of the Streets*, *George's Mother* in both of which the Bowery is the scene of action; *The Red Badge of Courage*, a novel concerning a soldier in the Civil War; *Active Service*, a romantic novel of little importance written upon the setting of Crane's experience in Greece, *The Third Violet*, a romantic semi-autobiographical novel with backgrounds in New York State of value only as a source of insight into the mind of Crane; and, last, an unfinished work, *The O'Ruddy*, which has been completed by Robert Barr.

The majority of Crane's work was done in the field of shorter prose writings: short stories and sketches. These have been catalogued in the following manner for the purpose of this thesis: (1) Social problem tales and sketches, the best of which are probably *An Experiment in Misery* and *A Dark Brown Dog*. On the whole the selections in this grouping are good in quality and were done in the earlier part of Crane's literary career. (2) War tales and sketches, which may be sub-divided in the following manner: Civil War, Spanish-American War, and *The Kicking Twelfth*, four sketches concerning a regiment in the imaginery kingdom of Spitzburgen. Among the better war tales are *A Mystery of Heroism* (1894) and *An Episode of War*. In general the quality of work in the other pieces is inferior and was produced hurriedly to supply demands of magazines. (3) Tales of local color and adventure, many gathered from Crane's western experiences. Several of his best known short-stories are in this group, including *The Blue Hotel*, *The*

Bride Comes to Yellow Sky, and The Open Boat. (4) Stories of humor and irony. Crane frequently attempted to be humorous, he was nearly always ironical. In the selections within this group one or both of these characteristics predominate. Mesmeric Mountain and Three Fables are well worth reading. (5) Stories of horror or gruesome effect were not nearly so frequent among Crane's writings as is often supposed. However, his talents were aptly suited to these types. The Monster is a significant longer short story dealing with a growth of hysteria throughout an entire community. Manacled is a striking description of death by fire. (6) Whilomville Stories are of children more realistically depicted than those in the better-known work of Booth Tarkington upon similar subjects. (7) Poetry. Crane's work in this field consists of two small volumes, The Black Riders and War is Kind, short, terse, cadence poems, expressing an embittered fatalistic philosophy. His unusual, thoroughly original poetry as well as his impressionistic prose style were forerunners of the twentieth century, and have been an influence upon many present-day literary artists.

CHAPTER V

THE LITERARY METHOD OF STEPHEN CRANE

> "Treat your notions like that," (said Crane)... "Forget what you think about it, and tell how you feel about it. Make the other fellow realize you are just as human as he is. That's the big secret of story-telling. Away with literary cads and canons. Be yourself.!"
>
> "You've got to feel the things you write if you want to make an impact on the world."[1]

Part of Crane's art lay in his ability to remain detached, yet at the same time he was "master at the aesthetic and psychological truthful deliniation of passion."[2] He was aloof and unemotional toward his work, yet that very work was often the portraying of human emotion in literature. The Red Badge of Courage is an epic of fear transcending into courage. Crane sought the reality of his own psychological experience for his data, yet when it was made form upon paper it had become a great universal experience of man, forever free from limitting mementoes of its author. The more Crane was able to keep his more tangible experiences out of his writing, the better was his work. He was able to write cooly and eloquently about experience when it was remote or general, so that it might have been that of anyone. Personal, biographical reality he was unable to make into art. The Third Violet supports this fact: it is pathetic to see the trash

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[1] Quoted from Stephen Crane by Arthur Oliver in Jersey Memories.

[2] Edward Garnett, Friday Nights, (New York. Alfred A. Knopf, 1922), "Literary Criticisms and Appreciations," (1st Series), Stephen Crane and His Work, p. 201-217.

Crane constructs from his own "tragedy" of love.

A real problem seems to arise in the consideration of Crane's objectivity. One authority writes: "All novels are ultimately subjective, it is only by tacit consent that people say Crane's writing is objective."[3] Another (Loggins) affirms: "All of Crane's writing is subjective." The problem, however, is not so simple as that. In a previous chapter of this thesis it was pointed out after a comparative study of the styles of Crane and Tolstoy that the latter was more subjective in his method. Crane deals constantly with the subject of emotion, yet as have been pointed out, his manner is detached. It is his exceedingly effective impressionistic style of writing that makes possible a sensing of emotional tone by the reader, from the coloring of external objects. "Crane keeps close to the surface--makes the surface betray the depths."[4] He applies an objective method to subjects whose usual treatment by most authors would be subjective. Perhaps Joseph Conrad touched upon the key to the critical confusion when he observed "that Crane 'had no surface'--he was all interior."[5]

Fortunately Crane seems to have written with no partisan cause in mind. His main concern was the expression

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[3] Gorham B. Munson, Style and Form in American Prose, (New York: Doubleday, Doran, 1929), Prose for Fiction: Stephen Crane, p. 173.

[4] Garnett, op. cit.

[5] As quoted by Kunitz and Haycroft in American Authors, 1600-1900, A Biographical Dictionary, (New York: Wilson Company, 1938), p. 189.

of his art in terms of his philosophy, not the exploitation of his art for the purpose of his philosophy. Usually he kept quite remote from causes of any kind, political and otherwise. This was as it should be. The Cuban sketches which even mention casually random details of the Spanish American War are among his worst.

Anything but the mere outline and color of detail are missing from the best of Crane's work. Nothing could be more remote from his method than documentation as practiced by the French naturalists. Crane was very clever at producing the impression of a whole picture in action and color with a few deft strokes, yet upon perusal the reader is often surprised to find that detail which has been conveyed to his mind is entirely lacking in the text.

Crane's writing is impressionism shot with color. He was especially susceptible to the effects of brilliant blues and flashing reds. Active Service while as a novel it is ineffective, is perhaps one of the most useful of all sources for providing a wide range of examples from Crane's style to reveal both his weaknesses and his characteristic genius. The following, in a sentence, is Crane's impressionism:

> Before them on the road was here and there a fez from the head of a fled Turkish soldier, and they lay like drops of blood from some wounded leviathan.[6]

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[6] Stephen Crane, Active Service, p. 116.

Sometimes the intensity with which man faces life in Crane's writing is so terrific as to appear to transcend the episode, and to become, in his solemn tone, a symbol greater and more universal in meaning than the experience it is projected from. Such occurence is not infrequent. Death and the Child contains one of the most powerful of these moments of symbolism.

> In the late afternoon the child ceased his play on the mountain with his flocks and his dogs. Part of the battle had whirled very near to the base of his hill, and the noise was very great. Sometimes he could see fantastic, smoky shapes, which resembled the curious figures in foam which one sees on the slant of a rough sea. The plain, indeed was etched in white circles and whirligigs, like the slope of a colossal wave. The child took seat on a stone, and contemplated the fight. He was beginning to be astonished. He had never before seen cattle herded with such uproar. Lines of flame flashed out here and there. It was a mystery. Finally without any preliminary indication he began to weep. If the men struggling on the plain had had time and greater vision, they could have seen this strange, tiny figure seated on a boulder, surveying them, while tears streamed. It was as simple as a powerful symbol.
>
> As the magic clear light of day amid the mountains dimmed the distances, and the plain shone as a pallid blue cloth marked by the red threads of the firing, the child arose and moved off to the unwelcoming door of his home. He called softly for his mother, and complained of his hunger in the familiar formulae. The pearl-colored cow, grinding her jaws thoughtfully, stared at him with her large eyes. The peaceful gloom of evening was slowly draping the hills.
>
> The child heard a rattle of loose stones on the hillside, and facing the sound, saw a moment later, a man drag himself up to the crest of the hill and fall panting. Forgetting his mother and his hunger, filled with calm

> interest, the child walked forward, and stood over the heaving form. His eyes, too, were now large and inscrutably wise, and sad, like those of an animal in the house.
>
> After a silence, he spoke inquiringly: "Are you a man?"
>
> . . . .
>
> Peza gasped in the manner of a fish. Palsied, windless, and abject, he confronted the primitive courage, the sovereign child, the brother of the mountains, the sky and the sea, and he knew that the definition of his misery could be written on a wee gross blade.[7]

At his poorest Crane lapsed into romanticism but even then his style was better than that of the average author of the day. However such writing has, happily, been nearly forgotten. His better works have not the slightest taint of it. Romanticism in the occurrence of the improbable is evident in the following passage from Active Service:

> He waited then, blanched and hopeless, for death to wing out of the darkness and strike him down. He heard a voice. The voice said: "Do you speak English?" For one or two seconds he could not even understand English, and then the great fact swelled up within him. This voice with all its quavers, was still undoubtedly the voice of Professor Harrison B. Wainwright of Washurt College.[8]

Crane told his stories in simple straightforward logical order, which was all example and no precept, expressing what he wanted to say briefly, yet aptly. One of the few characteristics which dates his work, but that only in passages of conversation, is his frequent use of slang,

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[7] Stephen Crane, Death and the Child in Twenty Stories, ed. Carl Van Doren, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1940), p. 342-3.

[8] Stephen Crane, Active Service.

much of which already seems archaic to the modern ear. In such tales as Maggie his use of Bowery language is justifiable and adds color to the setting. However, the college-boy slang used by the boys in Active Service dates that novel badly. Such expressions as, "He is a fly guy," have no meaning for most readers of today. In a very few cases Crane employed unusual spelling, apparently of his own manufacture, for no apparent reason, such as the use of "kerb" for "curb."

Crane was fundamentally a serious artist. He had no lightness of touch. Humor was often attempted by him but sometimes it remained flat, or often, drifted more happily into being ironical. The Reluctant Voyagers is an example of a story, intended to be humorous, where the usual sparceness of diction, brief rhythm and heavy tone, characteristic of Crane, develops a tenseness in the expectations of the reader, which are never fulfilled. The same tone used in the highly serious tale The Open Boat meets with overwhelming success.

Next to Crane's impressionism the one quality most characteristic of his method is the ironical twist with which he concludes so many of his tales. The effect is usually exceedingly dramatic and lasting. For anyone who remembers Maggie the words of the mother shreiking, "I'll forgive her!" echo and re-echo painfully over the bleak gray city from which Maggie is gone. Memory of her is colored with unforgettable, dramatic irony.

Almost without exception, Crane's poetry is ironical.

Its simplicity, austerity is even more extreme than that of his prose.

xxxi

Many workmen
Built a huge ball of masonry
Upon a mountain top
Then they went to the valley below,
And turned to behold their work.
"It is grand," they said;
They loved the thing.

Of a sudden it moved.
It came upon them swiftly;
It crushed them all to blood.
But some had opportunity to squeal.[9]

SUMMARY

Crane was master at the art of portraying human emotion from a detached point of view. He failed whenever he attempted to incorporate his own actual feelings or experiences within his writings. His method was of necessity an objective one. He avoided becoming involved in controversial matters and causes. He was an impressionist who reported with concise accuracy, who set his tone in deft, brief strokes of vivid color. At his best, simple stories assume a symbolism that bespeaks of the universal patterns and verities of life. At his worst Crane was prone to succumb to the dated romanticism of his era, especially when characterizing young women, whom he seemed unable to cope with. He often attempted humor but was fundamentally incapable of a light touch. Life was serious business and often bitter; the best of Crane's work was touched with irony.

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9. Stephen Crane, The Black Riders, XXXI.

CHAPTER VI

THE PHILOSOPHIC PERSPECTIVE OF STEPHEN CRANE

Crane liked to shock people; a blase surface hid a genuinely serious nature. Yet the philosophy he possessed did not arise from his backgrounds, but more as a reaction against them. His father, Jonathan Crane, was one of the most eloquent and learned Methodist ministers of his day. His son inherited his aptitude for using words, but not his ideas. Perhaps closeness to the church led him to lose any awe of it he might have had.

His poetry reveals the extent of his theology. Crane indirectly mocks man for the petty gods he bows to, yet beyond his irony and closest to his heart there is a wistful hope--it is no more than that--that there might be a God, tender and forgiving.

LI

A man went before a strange God--
The God of many men, sadly wise.
And the Diety thundered loudly,
Fat with rage, and puffing,
"Kneel, mortal, and cringe
And grovel and do homage
To My Particularly Sublime Majesty."
The man fled.

Then the man went to another God--
The God of his inner thoughts:
And this one looked at him
With soft eyes
Lit with infinite comprehension,
And said, "My poor child!"[1]

---

[1] Stephen Crane, The Black Riders.

Stephen Crane ever revealed himself in his literature as filled with a fearful sense of spiritual aloneness, craving comfort and reassurance in a manner that is childlike. He could not accept more than a deterministic philosophy in his questioning, yet he was afraid of the day when he would be compelled to face the void of nothingness alone. Thomas Beer was right when he asserted that Crane's life was governed by fear -- a fear which he had magnificently mastered in his literature. That is why his tone is often almost one of bravado. That is why his irony could be so strong, so bitter a thing. He must have heard the laughter of the gods mocking him. He spoke so bravely in the language of determinism, yet in secret he craved a tenderness which by his own defiant assertions could surely not exist.

Crane's fable, The Voice of the Mountain seems to symbolize his philosophy. An imprisoned giant (man upon the earth) longs more than all else for wings with which to find release (life above and outside of mere physical organism). He trusts in a tribe of treacherous little men (vain hopes) who promise the impossible for him. They make him no wings, but instead steal all his lands and worldly goods away, leaving him forever helpless and powerless to resist.--Crane portrays man as hopelessly caught in a meaningless physical existence out of which no roads lead away.

Yet life itself could be precious, as were the possessions of the giant, and hope, if there were any, was to be had in the living of it. When life was gone the loss was total and complete.

> The welcome of the land to the men from the sea was warm and generous; but a still and dripping shape was carried slowly up the beach, and the land's welcome for it could only be the different and sinster hospitality of the grave.[2]

G. Harrison Orians states that "Crane envisaged man (like the giant) as an animal driven by instinct and victimized by forces indifferent to his fate, his hopes, and his designs."[3] This is the biological determinism of Zola attributed to Crane.

Then, again, that same critic qualifies his statement:

> Crane's characters do not display a hopeless naturalistic vision, nor a supine acceptance of fate: their human refusal to surrender even to terror brings them to moments of god-like freedom. This may, of course, be a part of Crane's ironic understatement but it can be more honestly viewed as defiant gratitude greeting life.[4]

Stephen Crane's philosophy was a muddle of things, yet he may be judged, for the purposes of literature, by his writings, in which fear had been controlled, and hope put behind him. By his own efforts he made a deterministic perspective uppermost in his thinking. However, the critic should recognize the prolonged discipline that made his perspective possible. It was the way he wrote, truly enough, but it was not natural with him--this slender shield for his fears.

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[2] Stephen Crane, _The Open Boat_, to be found in _Twenty Stories_, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1940), p. 241.

[3] G. Harrison Orians, _A Short History of American Literature Analysed by Decades_, (New York: F. S. Crofts and Company, 1940), p. 248.

[4] Ibid., p. 253.

SUMMARY

Crane's philosophy of skepticism seems to have been in reaction to his conservative Methodist background of Christian faith to which he had been reared. The proximity of the church to his life stripped it of awe, and left the youth with a controlled sense of fear toward the universe. The end of man: to be robbed of all life, was what he dreaded. His philosophy was deterministic in that he saw man as powerless before universal forces that were indifferent to his fate.

CONCLUSION

EVALUATION OF THE WORK OF STEPHEN CRANE IN TERMS OF NATURALISM

In the two foregoing chapters Crane's method and philosophic perspective have been discussed. It now remains to weigh the observed facts in terms of naturalism.

Crane's work shows, for the most part, the detachment and freedom from indoctrination required of naturalism. However he does not in the least employ "micro-technique" nor indulge in the lengthy, heavily-laden and painstaking documentation which was the traditional responsibility of French naturalists.

His style is not characteristic of naturalism at all--it is impressionism: vivid, concise and dramatic in effect. What, by the naturalistic method of Zola might have been dealt with painstakingly at length, with a scientific accuracy delegated to detail, is usually summed up in Crane's writing by a vivid, revealing word or two, acute, yet full and rich. From The Red Badge of Courage:

> The distance was splintering and blaring with the voice of fighting.[1]
>
> ...filled with a tinsel courage.[2]
>
> The blue smoke-swallowed line writhed like a snake stepped upon. It swung its ends to and fro in an agony of fear and rage.[3]

---

[1] Stephen Crane, The Red Badge of Courage, (London: The New Library, Jonathan Cape, 1937), p. 161.

[2] Ibid., p. 164.

[3] Ibid., p. 188.

> He had pictured red letters of
> curious revenge.[4]

> The brigade was jaunty and seemed
> to point a proud thumb at the yelling wood.[5]

The ironical twist which he resorted to constantly is not a naturalistic method. Naturalism of itself is a simple, direct method of writing with scientific objectivity. The use of irony is a complex, indirect mode of expression in which the writer "has his tongue in his cheek". He portrays a situation out of tone with the accepted perspective to provide by contrast an effective manner of emphasis. Crane was repeatedly ironical in his poetry:

"Have you ever made a just man?"

"Oh, I have made three," answered God,

"But two of them are dead,
And the third--
Listen! listen!
And you will hear the thud of his defeat."[6]

Even Crane's subject-matter does not meet with the expected in naturalism. Maggie is almost a naturalistic novel: it set the course for his reputation to follow along. However Maggie closes in a haunting note of irony: "I'll forgive her!" Ordinarily Crane is neither revolting nor brutally frank as naturalists are reputed to be. He merely hints at facts artistically, sets the tone, but avoids detail

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4. Stephen Crane, The Red Badge of Courage, (London: The New Library, Jonathan Cape, 1937), p. 213.

5. Ibid., p. 232.

6. Stephen Crane, The Collected Poems of Stephen Crane, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1932), p. 83.

in accordance with his technique of impressionism.

In his poorer works a romantic weakness shows forth quite plainly. In The Third Violet and again in Active Service his treatment of young women is on the level of sentimentality. He appears to have been incapable of seeing them in a realistic light.

Well-used romanticism is not to be found in the works of Crane, but rather as a degeneration from the stronger, more firm modes of expression that embody the best of his art. His attempts at romantic poetry are mere drivel, like the following example:

> I wonder if sometimes in the dusk,
> When the brave lights that gild thy evenings
> Have not yet been touched with flame,
> I wonder if sometimes in the dusk
> Thou rememberest a time,
> A time when thou loved me
> And our love was to thee thy all?
> Is the memory rubbish now?
> An old gown
> Worn in an age of other fashions?
> Woe is me, oh, lost one,
> For that love is now to me
> A supernal dream,
> White, white, white, with many suns.[7]

It is difficult to determine how well-developed in Crane was a conscious use of symbolism. The Voice of The Mountain appears to possess a carefully worked-out symbolism, yet all truly great writers achieve a symbolism of which they may not be entirely conscious. Significant experience must always relate itself to the wider realm of entire race ex-

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7. Ibid., p. 123.

perience, that includes and transcends the individual.

Stephen Crane attempted consistent use of a deterministic philosophy in his writings, yet the more personal of his revelations, where he is less disciplined are shot with doubts, and half born hope, and flanking fears:

XLIV

I was in the darkness
I could not see my words
Nor the wishes of my heart.
Then suddenly there was a great light--
"Let me into darkness again."[8]

While the writings of Stephen Crane are predominently impressionistic, nevertheless, many naturalistic elements are contained therein. In contrast to the age from which he emerged Crane is surely a naturalist. However beside Zola or Hemingway he seems no naturalist at all, but an impressionist. Impressionism is a method; naturalism can be more than that. Crane does not employ naturalistic method; however, as has been pointed out, he attempts to embrace a deterministic (naturalistic) philosophy. Even in that he tends to falter. Stephen Crane, then, is a pseudo naturalist, an artist of genius who sought to take his place in the world that logic led him to believe in, that all his instincts rebelled and fought against. In his philosophy, he was a romantic thoroughly convinced that his ideals had never been, embracing without hope on alien soil. Yet the thing that remains most

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8. Stephen Crane, The Black Riders.

significant of him is his style: a brilliant impressionism which has already become a major influence in American literature.

ABSTRACT

For the evaluation of the naturalism of Stephen Crane it is first necessary to establish a definition for the term "naturalism" as applied to literature. A knowledge of philosophic origins of the term are helpful in the full understanding of its meaning and implications, which are by no means universally standard. Zola was first to bring the term to literature. His naturalism was a determinism originating in the philosophies of Marx and Spencer. Any basis for critera of naturalism must, of necessity, be based upon the naturalism of Zola; however care should be taken that the peculiarities of Zola's own manner of writing do not become permanently associated with the literary philosophy he fostered, as is too often the case.

Naturalism in literature may be reduced to two basic elements: I A deterministic philosophy, II Scientific method. The latter involves detachment in the handling of data, observation without exploitation of fact, careful documentation, and "micro-technique" (emphasis upon close, methodical detail, sparing nothing.)

Although Stephen Crane is considered a naturalist he cared little for the results achieved by Zola, nor was he familiar with the work of others among the French school of writers. His main European influence seems to have been Leo Tolstoy. The latter had much greater scope to his work than did Crane. The voluminity of it was not pleasing to

ABSTRACT

For the evaluation of the naturalism of Stephen Crane it is first necessary to establish a definition for the term "naturalism" as applied to literature. A knowledge of philosophic materials of the term are helpful to the full understanding of its meaning and implications, which are by no means universally accepted. Zola was first to bring the term to literature. His naturalism was a determinism originating in the philosophies of Marx and Darwin. Any basis for patterns of naturalism must, of necessity, be based upon the naturalism of Zola; however care should be taken that the peculiarities of Zola's own manner of writing do not become permanently associated with the literary philosophy he fostered, as is too often the case.

Naturalism in literature may be reduced to two basic elements: I. A deterministic philosophy. II Scientific method. The latter involves detachment in the handling of data, observation without an imposition of ideas, careful documentation, and "slice-of-life" (emphasis upon close, methodical details, popular writing.)

Although Stephen Crane is considered a naturalist he owed little for the results achieved to Zola, nor was he familiar with the work of others among the French school of writers. The main European influence seems to have been Leo Tolstoy. The latter had much greater scope in his work than did Crane. The popularity of it was not pleasing to

Crane. However, he must have found much in Tolstoy's writings with which he could feel a common bond, and much which was to come forth again in new words and settings from the pages of his own works. It was Tolstoy's descriptions of war that appealed especially to Stephen Crane and the influence of Tolstoy upon him in this field is noticeable. The two men also shared a strong sentiment (which is less significant from a literary point of view, yet should not be overlooked). Their love for animals, especially horses and dogs, which is obvious, always, wherever they appear upon the pages of their writings. The basic philosophies of the two men, however, were most unlike. Tolstoy possessed a well-developed philosophy in which he acknowledged a Supreme Power or Force pervading the universe, transcending, purposefully, the puny wills of men. Crane had not attained the poise necessary for the establishment of a philosophy. He was governed by fear. He would have liked to believe in a kindly universe, but, in fact, found nothing but chaos to be stilled only by unending night, of which he was in mortal fear.

Realism in America began in the work of the local colorists, in a movement independent of European literature. It was an expression free of the blacker pessimisms which were reflected in European writings. Each section of the country came to have one or more writers who attempted to characterizes its people and its customs. Strangely, Bret Harte, a romanticist, provided the impetus for the movement

in his stories of the west.

Realism of a more cosmopolitan variety began in the work of Henry James, an American by birth, a European in the tone of his work.

William Dean Howells was the first American scholar to read widely in the field of European naturalism. His own novels were the ultra-realism of his day, and he introduced Tolstoy to American readers.

Hamlin Garland depicting drab landscapes with his pen, from his middle western, native farm lands, gave one of the first indications of the fading of optimism in American literature which was bound to follow the passing of the frontier.

Mark Twain in his Life on the Mississippi seemed to catch the growing spirit of a part of America, yet during his life time he passed in his philosophy from jesting, simple humor into embitterment against the "Gilded Age" which enmeshed his later genius.

With the growth of the city, a new point of view for the literary artist became possible. Harold Frederic, Frank Norris and Stephen Crane were products of the new age, expressing a "modern" point-of-view. With them true naturalism was for the first time possible in America.

Harold Frederic attacked the petty narrow sins of conventionality with bitter vehemence. His best-known novel is The Damnation of Theron Ware.

Frank Norris became the disciple of Zola in America, and affected a deterministic philosophy in novels which were studies of simple personality traits, and in others dealing with economic problems. However his writings were often colored by the motive of reform, so that complete objectivity was not consistently maintained.

Of the three naturalists Stephen Crane was most objective and consistently deterministic, yet he probably made least conscious effort to follow a school or obey any standards except his own. Like many an original genius he would owe little to the background out of which he sprang.

Stephen Crane was principally a writer of prose: of novels, shorter works, stories and sketches; but also is well-known today for his poetry in which he made revolutionary advances.

His first work was a novelette, _Maggie, A Girl of the Streets_. The subject matter was realistically set forth, in a manner shocking to Victorian minds. It was ill-received until Crane's fame as an author had been spread by means of his superb novel of a boy confronted with battle: _The Red Badge of Courage_. His only sources for the latter book were the tales of soldiers, told to him as a child and the working of his imagination upon what _he_ would have done if faced with a similar situation. Crane never maintained such power again in a longer work, but many of his shorter sketches are exceptionally brilliant examples of impressionistic prose

writing. The following subjects were the main topics for his writings: war, life in the slums of New York, adventure in the "west" and "far-west," tales of horror and gruesome effect, tales of humor and irony, stories about children, based mainly upon his own boyhood adventures.

Crane published two brief volumes of poetry: The Black Riders and War is Kind. All the poems are in cadence verse; they are short, terse, ironical bits, expressing a bitter fatalistic philosophy.

Crane was master at the art of portraying human emotion from a detached point of view. He failed whenever he attempted to incorporate his own actual feelings or experience within his writings. His method was of necessity an objective one. He avoided becoming involved in controversial matters and causes. He was an impressionist who reported with concise accuracy, who set his tone in deft, brief strokes of vivid color. At his best, simple stories assume a symbolism that bespeaks of the universal patterns and verities of life. At his worst Crane was prone to succumb to the dated romanticism of his era, especially when characterizing young women, whom he seemed unable to cope with. He often attempted humor but was fundamentally incapable of a light touch. Life was serious business and often bitter; the best of Crane's work was touched with irony.

Crane's philosophy of skepticism seems to have been in reaction to his conservative Methodist background of Christian faith to which he had been reared. The proximity of

the church to his life stripped it of awe, and left the youth with a controlled sense of fear toward the universe. The end of man: to be robbed of all life, was what he dreaded. His philosophy was deterministic in that he saw man as powerless before universal forces that were indifferent to his fate. Yet he was not resigned to this conception; but feared and fought against it; he was a romantic thoroughly convinced that his ideals had never been, embracing without hope on alien soil. Upon a basis of comparison with the naturalism of Zola, Crane must be judged more impressionist than naturalist in his method. He moved toward naturalism out of a Victorian environment, but transcended that to create a new impressionism within American literature.

APPENDIX

Biographical notes

Crane, Stephen (1871-1900). The fourteenth and last child of Rev. Jonathan Townley Crane and his wife, Mary, was born while the family were living at 14 Mulberry Place, Newark, New Jersey. The father, Jonathan, was born a Presbyterian, but evidenced an independent mind by his change to Methodism because he objected to a point of doctrine. Both parents were well-educated for their day, and were concerned with current social problems.

In 1874 the Cranes moved to Bloomington, and later, thence to Paterson. Eventually the family settled at Port Jervis, New York, where Stephen gained most of the impressions later crystallized into Whilomville Stories. It was there that Jonathan Crane died, worked to death by his kindnesses.

In 1883 Mrs. Crane took her children to Asbury Park, New Jersey. Stephen grew into a vigorous lad who loved horses, and who was "keen about" baseball. He attended Hudson River Institute, a military school, in 1887; and in the next year went to work for his brother Townley at a press bureau in Asbury Park, during his summer vacation. It was here that he gained his first professional writing experience. This summer was followed by a year each at Lafayette College and Syracuse University before Stephen gave up formal education for good to seek his literary fortune in New York City, where he worked for a short time on the Herald and Tribune. He

was fired by the Herald and thereafter led a near-starvation existence until he had written Maggie--and even longer, until The Red Badge of Courage brought him fame. The period of poverty contributed a lasting damage to his health from which he was never to recover.

Financed by the receipts of his writings Crane set forth upon a trip into the west in search of new writing materials, which he found aplenty. Following this interlude he was sent with a filibustering expedition to Cuba, at the end of 1896. His ship was sunk, and the fifty hours he spent in a life boat upon the open sea are accurately depicted in The Open Boat. He went subsequently to Greece to report on the war there, but the strain of his past ordeals had been too much: he fell seriously ill. Cora Taylor, whom he had met in Florida, travelled across the ocean to nurse him, and later they were married. She was older than he, the former mistress of a Jacksonville politician, but she made him a fine and devoted wife, famed for her good cooking, and loyal to her husband through the very last of his days.

Crane returned to New York when he was able to travel, but found that in his absence ugly stories had grown about his reputation, until he had become such an object for curiosity and gossip that he saw fit to make his home in England from that time forward.

On his way to New York he had visited as correspondent, the scene of the Spanish American War in Cuba. From his observations many of his less worthy sketches were written,

but his health was too far spent, then, for him to maintain his previous high standards of literary effort.

In the last months of his life Cora Crane took him to Germany, from England, to seek a restoration of his lost health. However it proved too late, and he died, without returning home, of tuberculosis on June 4, 1900.

Frederic, Harold (1856-98) Nought is to be found of Harold Frederic in the American literature texts now in use, therefore a few facts about him are recorded here. He was born in "up-state" New York. He did newspaper reporting at an early age and at twenty-two became editor of the *Utica Observer*, and later, editor of the *Albany Evening Journal*. Stephen Crane came to know him when he served as London correspondent for the *New York Times*. Some of his novels are:

Seth's Brother's Wife (1887)
The Lawton Girl (1890)
The Copperhead (1893)
The Damnation of Theron Ware (1890)

Holz, Arno (1863-1929)

> Arno Holz was a Prussian; he lacked the amorous reverence which the pantheists felt for the organic, indifferentiated mass of nature. He sought on another plane the absolute truth which his group demanded. A thinker who reasoned like a geometrician, he invented the formula of "rational realism"... Zola's formula - a slice of nature seen through a human temperament -- seemed to Holz to involve one capital sin: it left the door wide open to temperament; this he felt, accounted for the "romantic tra-la-la" with which the French naturalists' work was tainted. Once

this fact was recognized, nothing remained but to carry the experimental theory to its ultimate conclusion, to solve the equation by eliminating the unknown -- which meant eliminating temperament.[1]

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[1] Felix Bertaux, A Panorama of German Literature, from 1871 to 1931, translated by John J. Trounstine, (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1935), p. 35.

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